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TEMPLE BAR

A London Magazine

FOR TOWN AND COUNTRY READERS.

VOL. XLIII.

DECEMBER 1874 TO APRIL 1875.

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TEMPLE BAR.

DECEMBER 1874.

Leah: A Woman of Fashion.

By MRS. EDWARDES,

Author of 'Ought We to Visit Her?' 'Archie Lovell,' etc.

Chapter V.

ENTER—MY LORD STAIR.

IT is Madame Bonchrétien's habit to acknowledge that Providence has crowned her widowed lot with many mercies; of these, George Francis Lord Stair, fifth Viscount of that name, is, beyond dispute, the topmost glory, the herb of grace, the sweet marjoram of the salad.

"I have, of my habitués, the widow of an admiral; Mr. Pettingall, one of the oldest inhabitants of Paris, and a churchwarden of the Temple; and —— Milor Stair!"

Thus speaks Madame when bent on luring new-comers into her circle, and not in vain. On more than one occasion has she seen flutterers acquire decision, sceptics converted on the spot, by the magic of that one word—Milor!

Milor does not pass his life, as you may believe, in the Rue Castiglione. In London, Monaco, Vienna, the face of George Francis Lord Stair is periodically familiar. But the Rue Castiglione is the nearest approach to a home that he possesses; an empty portmanteau or two, bearing his noble name in black letters, reside there always, his bills go there, the more respectable of his letters go there, and, absent or present, he has never, during the past five years, been out of Madame Bonchrétien's debt. Has she not just cause to boast of Milor Stair as a resident?

His acquaintance with Leah Pascal began a fortnight ago; the acquaintance that, if Miss Smith may be credited, already bids fair to endanger Jack Chamberlayne's peace; but Leah Pascal and Lord

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Stair are both adepts in the dangerous art of "safe" flirtation; and whatever we do well we do quickly! Leah, being handsome, engaged, and rich—prospectively, Lord Stair thought it worth his while to lay siege to her vanity within twenty-four hours of his introduction to her. I say vanity, advisedly. Lord Stair never troubles himself about women's hearts. Vanity and hunger are the only human motive powers that his creed acknowledges. Lord Stair being a notorious Lovelace, a Lovelace scarcely better known for his conquests than for his own invulnerability, Leah resolved to subjugate *him* even before she had lifted her eyes to his face. And both have succeeded fairly well; with what ultimate gain to themselves or to society we shall see later on.

That the flirtation has multiplied Leah's future chances as a woman of fashion is beyond question; Lord Stair, bankrupt and erewhile outlaw though he be, knowing Everybody, of the half world as of the whole, in London. Nor can the sincerity of his attentions (I was nearly writing his intentions) be questioned. He gives up his club of an evening that he may sun himself in the yellow light of Miss Leah's eyes. He allows Colonel Pascal to walk arm-and-arm with him about the Rue de Rivoli and the Bois. He has even borrowed a hundred pounds of the lover, little Jack Chamberlayne, who is at present in Paris, awaiting his marriage. Whenever Lord Stair is thoroughly in earnest on any subject, you may be quite sure that he will borrow money from some one as an initiatory proceeding.

"We missed you terribly, last evening, Milor. Mademoiselle Leah essayed her diamonds, the last delicious gift of ce cher Monsieur Jack, but we had not got Milor to assist us with his taste."

Leah and Lord Stair are dawdling over their late breakfast in the salle à manger, while Madame Bonchrétien, serviette in hand, night-cap on head, flattery on tongue, flits nimbly to and fro about the room. To-day is a field-day in the establishment; Mr. Chamberlayne invited in state to dine with Colonel Pascal; and the whole house is in a fever of preparation. Even the two supremest people in Madame's universe, the bride elect and Milor, are forced to eat their breakfast at a side table. The centre one groans with piles of glass, artificial flowers in disorder, mock-silver dish covers, and epergnes still untwisted from their tissue paper; all the raw material that is to adorn Madame's dîner russe, the same material that eight days later shall grace Leah's wedding feast.

"Yes, indeed, we missed you," says Miss Pascal, with one of her side looks. "I almost think I miss Jack when I have to spend the evening among the old ladies unrelieved. Not that poor Jack is amusing, but he makes a noise, and that is something. By-the-by, you and papa dined with him last night, Lord Stair. What did you all do?—bore yourselves and each other very unmercifully?"

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"I am always bored except when I am in one place now, Leah," is Lord Stair's answer. He began playfully to call her "Leah" on the first day of her return to Paris, and the joke stands now; even Mr. Chamberlayne having to accept it with as good a grace as he can. "But the party, as a party, was a success. Chamberlayne gave us, as he always does, an excellent dinner, excellently served, and had some capital fellows to meet us."

"And afterwards?"

"Afterwards, we had a pleasant little game of loo. I am ashamed to say how much your father and I came away to the good, Leah. Chamberlayne lost, of course. A man who is winning life's real prizes, like Chamberlayne, may be content to exhaust his bad fortune upon loo and écarté!"

Lord Stair sighs, and pushes away his plate. A man evidently without morning appetite, but whether from the state of his *morale* or his stomach, it would be hard to guess; impaired digestion producing symptoms so closely resembling those of overburthened heart or conscience. A sallow, fattish man, forty on his last birthday, says the 'Peerage,' bald, with thin reddish mustache, quite red hair, and an ugly obliquity in his small grey eyes, that, perhaps, if he were not a Viscount, might be called a squint. And still he is distinguished-looking; tall, erect—Lord Stair was in the Guards in his youth—and in spite of his chronic insolvency, one of the best-tailored men in Europe. His teeth are white and well-shaped, his hands white and well-shaped, though somewhat overfat like his figure; his manner of entering and leaving a room, putting on an opera cloak, or holding fans and bouquets, as near perfection as anything mortal can be. Of his mental qualities it would be harder to speak; seeing that to men he seldom talks at all, while to women he talks in whispers that the world (happily for the world) hears not. He tells stories rather well, of a certain Rabelaisque flavour, and short; and he is always well posted in the last scandal of the hour, political or social, but coy of revealing it. A man who impresses you with the notion that he was born to succeed in some one or other of the world's great charlatanries—diplomatic, stock-jobbing, private inquiring, or the like. And who *has* succeeded . . . . no, these are not the pages wherein to chronicle Lord Stair's past life.

"If he has brought so many people to grief," said Leah, once—some of the old ladies, watching the dawning flirtation, thought it a duty to advise the girl as to poor dear Lord Stair's reputation—"If he has brought so many exemplary people to grief, destroyed the happiness of so many virtuous households, all I can say is, that the happiness of virtuous households must rest upon very shaky foundations. My peace of mind endangered by Lord Stair? Why, he is the very ugliest man out—bald, red-haired, a squint, and the age of papa. Oh, I don't care

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about the 'Peerage,' all books tell stories—the age of papa! He takes a fatherly interest in my affairs, he calls me 'Leah,' as he calls Naomi 'Naomi,' and seems disposed to be kind to Jack and me after we are married. Dear, good old harmless goose that he is!"

Which innocent little outburst of credulity must not, however, be received as Gospel. Some persons are disingenuous on principle, some from habit, others from fear. There is a fine natural spontaneous insincerity about Leah Pascal, an instinct, impelling her to falsehood, just as instinct impels the mole to burrow or the otter to dive. She dissembles because she must. Remembering the two strains of blood that mingle in her veins—blind forces, shaping thought and action just as peremptorily as they mould lips and chin—I don't know that the idiosyncracy can be marvelled at.

Lord Stair pushes away his plate after he has swallowed a couple of mouthfuls; nor does Miss Pascal show a much robuster appetite. A girl of twenty should be able to breakfast heartily at any hour, off any materials, but Leah has all the fastidious caprices, the inchoate likes and dislikes, of a genuine woman of fashion. With well made little plats and chablis she might eat. These half-cold cutlets, this most ordinary of Bordeaux, re-corked after yesterday's dinner, tempt her not.

"Nous mangeong de pease ong pease," growls Mrs. Wynch. The old woman, in a snuffy camisole and with her wig awry, is breakfasting alone at a corner of the big table; a position from whence Bonchrétien, Désiré, and Miss Smith have in vain tried to dislodge her. She pays as well, pays better, than Colonel Pascal—pray, are her bougies, her service, "compris"?—would not move from her own place at breakfast though a hundred Colonel Pascals were going to give mock-fine dinners to their mock-fine friends. "Madame Bonchrétien, Désiré, Rose—where are you all? I say we eat from worse to worse. This fish smells. At the pension in the Rue Boissy you get fish, Fresh fish, two entrées, and a dessert for breakfast. But that's the way when you stay too long in a place. I have lived under Madame's roof fifteen years, I have paid Madame over seventeen hundred pounds, I can show her own receipts for them, and this is the way she treats me now. Votter poissong pooh, Madame! But the French are all alike, all alike."

She sits muttering anathemas, and shaking her poor old palsied head over her well-kept "poissong," while Madame, gay as a grasshopper, flits hither and thither among her artificial flowers and epergnes, unheeding. That Mrs. Wynch is not likely to leave, Bonchrétien knows. Her complaints, her threats, are perennial, like her bursts of passion; but she stays.

"She return always to cook at my stove," Bonchrétien will say, in her wonted style of idiom, and with an expressive shrugging of the shoulders.

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Where, at eighty, shall a forlorn human soul, bereft of all nearer ties of kith or kin, find new shelter? Mrs. Wynch will not leave the Rue Castiglione till the undertaker carry her thence; and if she did, Bonchrétien could bear the loss. Mrs. Wynch's money tided the Bonchrétien family over a good many dark shoals in days gone by; but Madame has risen in the world now, and her memory, like that of some other successful persons, is short. Besides, does not Mrs. Wynch's income die with her? Who can feel sympathy for a cross-grained exacting old woman of eighty, who has been selfish enough to sink her capital in a life assurance?

Mrs. Wynch goes on muttering anathemas, her head bowed down over her plate; Madame is busy among her epergnes; Milor, in the distant corner, sits whispering into Leah's ear; whispering, it may be conjectured, about some subject of unusual interest, if one may guess from his companion's downcast eyes, the smiles, half reluctant, half approving, that play round the corners of her lips. To these, just as the big clock above the mantlepiece strikes twelve, enters Danton, hat in hand. Danton's hours are not the hours of the ordinary Anglo-Parisian. At six, winter and summer, he has his early cup of tea. Before seven he is at work, either abroad in the city, or in his own room, according to the season of the year. At noon he breakfasts, or dines, as you choose to call the meal, and *not* upon cold cutlets and overkept fish. From Madame down to the lowest scullery woman, not a functionary in the house but cares for the comfort of this "out-at-elbows medical student" more than for that of all the other boarders put together.

"Danton! What, you have come back, have you?" cries old Mrs. Wynch. "I was beginning to think we had got rid of you for good. You will not find the house improved in any way, sir, nor the company neither, during your absence."

"And your cough, Mrs. Wynch?" he asks, bending over the shrunken old form, kindly. "Why, you are looking charming—ten years younger than when I left."

"Get away with you!" cries the old woman, but a look of something like pleasure brightens over her crabbed face. "Ten years younger, indeed! Who could look younger on such a diet? I know what my relations will say when I return to England." She is always talking of England and her relations, but has seen neither for twenty years. "'Is that you, Lavinia?' they'll say. 'Why, where are your good looks? where's your ong-bong-pong?' I was a well-preserved, well-nourished woman, Danton, when first I came under Madame's roof."

Bonchrétien, at this, looks round with a dangerous eye from her work, and Danton, who probably knows the storm-signals by dark experience, hastens to ask Mrs. Wynch why the breakfast is not placed on the long table as usual? Has Madame got an addition to her guests, or what?

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"Madame's guests are going to see company, Danton; that's what it is. You and I, who pay like the rest, may be made comfortable or uncomfortable—that don't matter to Madame! The French are all alike. You remember Pascal, don't you?—Colonel Pascal? A man with a good deal of sham jewelry and sham talk? Well, he has got a grown-up daughter here, now."

"Mees Pascal is in the room," shouts Bonchrétien, in an agony, across a pyramid of piled-up chairs. "Mees Pascal is at breakfast beside Milor!"

But Mrs. Wynch, deaf at all times, is never so deaf as when Madame Bonchrétien attempts in earnest to make her hear.

"A grown-up daughter, and a handsome girl too. And she is going to be married. Her sweetheart will dine here to-day."

Bonchrétien breathes again. Considering the speaker, it might have been worse. If only one could be sure that this were all!

"Sweetheart! When I was young, girls *loved*. I made a love-match myself—a captain in a marching regiment; not sixpence between us. I went over the world with him—my commanding officer, I used to call him; and he died a general. He had no diamonds to give me as a wedding gift, I can tell you; but we loved each other; we had youth and health and high spirits. . . . But now—Danton, shall I tell you what Miss Pascal's sweetheart is? The French have got the exact word for such men, as they have got plenty of the original article. He is one of these petty cravies" (so does Mrs. Wynch pronounce the term *petit crevé*). "I wish Colonel Pascal joy of the match. A handsome girl, and a petty cravy like Chamberlayne for a husband!"

Happily, at this moment, Danton's breakfast enters, and Mrs. Wynch leaves off; it may be hoped, unheard of Leah and Lord Stair, whose murmured conversation in the distant corner of the room still continues.

"Mr. Danton is—a hanger-on in some shape of the house, I believe," remarks Lord Stair. "A relation, or admirer, I think some one told me, of our good Madame Bonchrétien's."

He noticed the flutter of Leah's eyelid, the sudden flush on Leah's cheek, when Danton entered the room five minutes ago, and so would sneer down any possible rivalry without delay. The two men, though living under the same roof, meeting daily, hourly, for nearly three years past, have never been more than potential enemies till this moment—this moment, when Leah's coquetry brings them, at once and for ever, into sharpest collision. Women can seldom be thrown closely together without drifting into friendship or hatred. Men can wish each other good morning for half a lifetime with no other feeling than that of absolute indifference. "Danton—Danton?

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Ah, to be sure! lodges in the same house with me—plays the piano—half-headed sort of fellow, with ideas. Was to have been a parson, they say, but could not digest the Thirty-nine Articles; then a doctor, but turned scrupulous as to pills and black draughts. His wife, I am told, preferring bread-and-butter to conscience, ran away from him, one fine day. Remarkably sensible of the wife." This would have pretty accurately summarised Lord Stair's opinions; if, indeed, he ever troubled himself to entertain any on the subject of his fellow-lodger. "A man, naturally, with about three inches of brain; lucky as to tailors and posture-masters. Fool and knave in him about evenly balanced. Far too much lactic acid in the blood." This would have been Danton's summing up of George Francis Lord Stair.

"A hanger-on, or admirer of our good Madame's." Leah continuing silent, Lord Stair thus proceeds. "And, upon my word, I envy Mr. Danton his bonnes fortunes. While the rest of us starve on cold cutlets, Mr. Danton gets all his little plats sent, hot and steaming, from the kitchen."

The tone, rather than the words, imply contempt; and Leah—so influenced is she already by Lord Stair—feels half ashamed of her "conquest" of last night. The feeling is succeeded, almost before it has had birth, by one of those sharp revulsions to which women of her nervous febrile type are ever liable. Looking across the room, her eyes encounter Danton's: he is just sharing a savoury ragout with Mrs. Wynch, and a smile of goodness—of *bonté*, I mean; we have no equivalent for *bonté* in English—lights up his dark face like a sunbeam. Their eyes meet; Danton bows coldly, as a man would bow to any acquaintance of yesterday, and Leah blushes in her very soul—a little also on the cheek, her companion notices.

Until this moment the girl has regarded Lord Stair as the most glorious of her conquests. Jack Chamberlayne, as a prize matrimonial, is well enough. Was not half London, and afterwards the whole of Scarborough, fighting for him—mothers, daughters, aristocracy, commons, alike—when her yellow eyes (a little aided, perhaps, by the strategies of Cousin Bill) carried him off? But it is difficult to feel proud of Jack Chamberlayne, personally. Leah has only to appear in the Bois or at a theatre, with Lord Stair, to be at once distinguished. "Lord Stair!" so people, she feels, *must* speak of them. "And who is his companion?—who is that beautiful woman to whom he is devoted?" Never, among her slaves—and she has had slaves since she was fifteen—has she numbered one so redounding to the glory of the moment, the glory dearest to vanity, as Lord Stair. And behold! she blushes, with shame, over herself, over their intimacy, over all that, not five minutes ago, she gloried in! Gifted already with the prescience any genuine feeling confers, she sees herself

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suddenly—as Danton sees her. Jack Chamberlayne, to whom she is sold; Lord Stair, who is to be the house friend of Jack Chamberlayne's establishment; them also she sees, with a vision not her own. . . . . If at this instant the chance of freedom could miraculously come to her, honest love for her portion, and the happiness honest love brings with it, no silks or diamonds, no fashion, no Lord Stair!—

"My dearest Mees," says Bonchrétien's creamy voice, over her shoulder. "If Mees could accord me one instant of attention? Milor will pardon us. I have here," handing Leah a sheet of paper, "the names of our little society, as we are to dine."

Leah glances carelessly over the list. "The society will be all right, Madame, as far as I can see; only please make one trifling alteration. Just put Mr. Chamberlayne between Mrs. Tomson and Madame de Miramion; and I dare say Lord Stair, under the circumstances, would not mind taking me? Yes, that will do better now. Mr. Pettingall and Naomi will make the number even on our side of the table; and Deb—oh, poor little Deb, in the corner there, away from every one!"

"Mees Deb sit in her corner of predilection," says Bonchrétien. "Her chair is next M. Danton's. Mees Deb would rather fail of her dinner than of him."

"M. Danton?" repeats Leah, indifferently—as though she had not spoken of Deb purposely to lead up to his name! "By the way, which is M. Danton's place, Madame? I do not see his name on your list."

Madame gives her eyes a roll, pregnant with meaning, in the direction of Danton; then, lowering her voice confidentially, "Small chance that M. Danton will be of the society," she explains. "When M. Danton returns to Paris after a month's absence, who shall count upon him? A student in rags, of the hospital; a dancer, half-starved, of the theatre; the first one he meets, and who has not the piece of twenty sous in his pocket—dines with Danton at a restaurant. Ah, that is so!" Bonchrétien shrugs her shoulders pityingly. "Danton is Danton! No changing him."

"There will be twelve at table, as it is, Leah," remarks Lord Stair, in his slow undertone. "Surely, you would not run the risk of an unlucky thirteenth, upon so auspicious an occasion?"

For a moment or more, Leah seems to vacillate; then, abruptly, she returns the paper to Madame Bonchrétien's hand, rises, and walks to the other end of the room, Lord Stair watching her.

That the girl has taken a sudden fancy to Danton's handsome face he suspects—a fancy! Lord Stair's imagination could not, by possibility, soar higher in the regions of love than this. That it will be a "fancy" widely differing from any sentiment she feels, or ever can feel, towards himself, he is certain. Also, that there is not the

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remotest risk of its imperilling her fidelity to the Chamberlayne estates. The question is, how to make this fancy, love-fit, call it as you will, work best into his, Lord Stair's own game. For that he has other intentions than the mere pastime of the moment, you may be sure. Lord Stair does not walk arm-in-arm down the Bois with Colonel Pascal, has not borrowed a hundred pounds from Jack Chamberlayne, for nothing. Leah is to be next season's reigning beauty, a twelve weeks' wonder in the Row, a notoriety, eclipsing all the other "peccadilloes of all Piccadilly," and with Lord Stair for her slave—slave, guide, mentor, and most implacable tyrant! It is not the first time he has chalked out, matured, and brought to the bitter end, a precisely similar scheme.

To become the fashion a woman will sell her soul alive. This is one of Lord Stair's pet beliefs. Curiously enough, he holds another—that a woman has no soul to sell; which, to say the least of it, is contradictory!

Chapter VI.

PRINCE CHARMING AT HOME.

"M. Danton, I have a favour to ask of you."

She stands before him with the loveliest flush of shame upon her face; her hands clasped together, her eyes raised timidly, beseechingly, to his. Very handsome she looks thus; infinitely handsomer than he gave her credit for being last night. Her skin, that Danton had a suspicion would prove sallow by daylight, is, he discovers, without flaw; velvety, mellow in tone as the petal of a Bengal rose, and of texture as delicate. Her hair, figure, hands, all surpass in reality the picture his memory had stored of them. And her voice—never, surely, had woman, even a Hebrew woman, a voice more instinct with fine native melody than Leah Pascal's!

And he is repulsed by her still; repulsed, yet potently attracted. Amidst such wild contradictions do passions, not "fancies," take their rise.

"Surely Miss Pascal need never ask a favour of any man," he answers, getting up from the table and moving a step or two in the direction of the door.

"Because it is impossible for me to be refused?" she returns, gaily.

"Because it is impossible that you can have a favour to ask. You have only to command."

"And you to obey? Very well, M. Danton. I command you to dine with us this evening at seven. Papa has asked our friend Mr. Chamberlayne to dinner, and we wish all the people in the house to look upon themselves as our guests."

"You will have a sufficiently large party without me."

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"But if I *ask* you, M. Danton?"

"I have only just returned to Paris, Miss Pascal. My hours are not my own. The first friend I meet in the street"——

"I know. Madame Bonchrétien told me all that. The first student in rags of the hospital, the first dancer, half-starved, of the theatre. But I consider that we have as good a claim as students in rags or dancers half-starved, and I will not accept the excuse. Are you engaged for this evening—yes, or no?"

"I am not engaged, formally."

"And you will join our party? I command—I mean . . . it would give me such pleasure if you will."

After a second or two of silence, "I will promise to come readily, on one condition," answers Danton. Madame all this time is holding Milor's ear captive, with silken flatteries, Mrs. Wynch is almost choking herself over her ragout. (Grudge not the old soul that ragout, reader; Nature does but leave this one poor pleasure for our solace, at the last.) "I will come, readily, if you will answer a very simple question. What is your object in asking me?"

"My—object?" she stammers, her eyes sinking to the floor. For her age, Leah Pascal's experience of a certain showily-varnished sort of human nature is considerable. She knows nothing, either by theory or practice, of a nature like Danton's, and already she fears him, hesitates; is uncertain whether truth or falsehood will best allure him to her feet. "I hardly understand you, M. Danton. Papa has invited Mr. Chamberlayne, and we hope to spend a pleasant evening, and"——

"What is your object?" he repeats, looking at her with barely-concealed impatience. "Let us tell each other the truth, Miss Pascal, as far as we can, from the beginning. It will save complications in the end. Why do you wish me to witness Mr. Chamberlayne's happiness?"

"I don't know that there is any very special happiness to witness." Thus much Leah manages to reply, with tolerable self-possession, but her lips quiver; her heart beats, as no declaration of love—she has listened to several—ever caused it to beat in her life before.

"And you ask me for my own good, then?" he persists. "Honestly and truly, you believe that I should not show much greater wisdom by staying away?"

No coquetting with this man; try as one will. Love may be got from him; sooner, perhaps, than could be wished. There will be no trifling in the transaction. A Jack Chamberlayne for one's diamond supplyer; a Lord Stair for theatres and public exhibitions, generally; a Danton, to play at sentiment with, and befool—Never! For good or for evil, for loving or for hating, Eugene Danton is thorough, and Leah Pascal, actress by nature though she be, artificial through every

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tradition, every example of her life, recognises this thoroughness and already bows before it.

"If we only did what was wise, we should do very few things that are pleasant, M. Danton! But, I dare say," she adds lightly, "Madame Bonchrétien is right. There are much stronger attractions for you elsewhere than any poor litle dissipations we can offer—if I only knew."

"If you only knew. Ah, Miss Pascal, if we only knew things that are hidden from us, I should not have returned to Paris till your wedding was over, for certain."

She stands a second or two, irresolute, after this avowal, for an avowal of a kind it is, then turns from him without a word; and Danton, quietly taking up his hat, walks away out of the room and out of the house.

"A très bong coor," says old Mrs. Wynch, looking up at length from her plate. "I know your father and he don't like each other, Miss Pascal, nor my lord, neither—how should they? Danton's an honest man." Bitter things have transpired since those roseate summer evenings when Désiré used to bear Mrs. Wynch's snuffbox to "M'sieur le Militairy," at dessert. Send him her snuffbox! The old woman now cuts M'sieur le Militairy dead, if she chance to meet him on the stairs. "What do you think, Madame?" this, she shouts, with emphasis, to Bonchrétien. "I say Danton's an honest man and true. I don't care who in this boarding-house hears me."

"Ah, ciel! Her eccentricities!" murmurs Madame, scenting offensive aspersions on Milor in the word "honest." "We are all true, we are all honest, Mrs. Wynch—M. Danton and all ze whole society of my house."

"And the very highest praise you can give us, Madame," says Lord Stair, coming across the room to Leah's side. "'An honest man's the noblest work of God,' Leah, is he not?"

"When I know more about the subject, I will give you my answer, Lord Stair," says Leah, coldly. "I have not had much to do with angels, hitherto, except fallen ones."

"Hitherto. But remember you have just made M. Danton's acquaintance."

He adds some remark in a whisper that brings back the smile to Leah's lip, the colour to her cheek. Every chord, save one, in this feverishly-strung, vain, ambitious nature, Lord Stair can touch with a master hand. The girl, like her father, loves money with passion; no difficult task to keep her faithful to Jack Chamberlayne. Like her father, she loves rank, or the distinction rank may confer on herself; no difficult task to keep her faithful (such fidelity as it is) to Lord Stair. For the rest—oh, a cynical word of praise, a pitying disparagement, here and there, will withhold her for the present from carrying

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her fancy for Danton too far, and at some future day the existence of the fancy may prove rather convenient than the reverse. So judges Lord Stair, coming close to the truth, yet fatally missing it, after the manner of cynics. Have I not said that there is one chord in Leah Pascal's nature beyond his power to touch?

. . . The day passes by arrow quick. Alas! each to-day becomes yesterday with fearful haste to Leah now; ere she can collect her own soul sufficiently to commune therewith to-day will be the yesterday of her bridal. A drive with half tipsy little Jack Chamberlayne, Deb doing propriety, in the Bois de Boulogne; a twilight flirtation with perfectly sober Lord Stair, no one doing propriety at all, in Madame's salon; every intervening minute filled up with millinery and the vendors of millinery. A quickly past, on the whole a singularly happy day. Admirers and new fashions suffice, as a rule, for Leah's earthly contentment, and to-day admirers and new fashions both are edged by the expectation of a keener delight. She dresses half an hour too soon for dinner, essays Jack's latest gift of diamonds—is discontented with their effect, puts on her pearls, her sapphires, discards them all. Debbie—in the agonised excitement, herself, of a rose-coloured sash and uncrumpled muslin—Debbie watches these unwonted signs of perturbation on the part of her elder sister, and can draw no other conclusion therefrom than this, that Leah must be falling in love with Jack Chamberlayne in spite of everything.

"If it had only been with Danton!" thinks the child, pausing for a moment as she fastens on her diminutive satin shoe. But then if it had been with Danton there would be no money, no dinner-party, no rose-coloured sash for Debbie, or satin shoes with *real* mother-o'pearl buttons, like the grown-up ladies wear in the centre of the rosettes!

Considering those rosettes, even Deb, for the first time in her life, turns mercenary, feels that wealth, encumbered though it be by a lover redolent of tobacco and who plays Negro melodies on his chin, is not without its advantages.

Dinner is fixed for seven. At a quarter before the hour Colonel Pascal, in full evening canonicals, awaits his guest upon the hearth-rug (laid down only on state occasions) of Madame Bonchrétien's drawing-room. Evening dress is not, ordinarily, the rule of the house; but to-night, in honour of the lovers, is to be a ceremony of white gloves, and the ladies are still in the tortures of preparation upstairs. All, save Mrs. Wynch. Fond of good food though the old woman be, she loves the indulgence of her humours better—will dine, shivering, in her own room off a "bully," sooner than accept Colonel Pascal's hospitality.

"A man who will help himself before a lady!" The feud, I may say, shortly, commenced over stewed pigeons, Colonel Pascal taking the last piece of breast in the dish and handing the bones to his

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neighbour. "A man who will help himself before a lady, who marries his daughter to a petty cravy, who pads, who laces. . . . I thank you, Madame! I have lived under your roof fifteen years, I have had to submit to much; but I will not lower my dignity to become the guest of an ugly-bred person like Colonel Pascal."

Colonel Pascal is certainly not an ugly-bred person, as far as externals go; above all, when got up, as at present, for effect, with every assistance that embroidered linen, diamond studs, rings, and a bit of red ribbon at one's button-hole, can yield. No one quite knows what Order of Merit that bit of ribbon represents; but on the Continent these details matter little, and Colonel Pascal is too thorough a cosmopolitan ever to make his appearance decorated on the northern side of the Channel.

A small swarthy man, not over bald, considering his five and fifty years, with well-dyed whiskers à la Dundreary, keen dark eyes, a handsome hawk nose, and such a smile—the smile of a man whose heart has not laughed for half a lifetime! Deep lines in plenty have the world, flesh, and auxiliaries, graven round Colonel Pascal's brow and lips; and still he has worn well; thanks to his tailor, dentist, admirable incapacity for feeling, and the serenity of conscience engendered by a fine digestion, looks a dozen years at least younger than he is. For good genial mammon worship, frank readiness of sympathy with all forms of human success, I don't know that I ever met his equal. His presence brings sunshine into the house of every prosperous man he enters—January sunshine, that makes itself seen, not felt. He is indeed the most unfailing weather-gauge of prosperity extant. Get on in the world, honourably or dishonourably, so long as you get on; possess a title, a carriage, a cook; be anything but poor and obscure, and you will find Colonel Pascal the most sincerely appreciative of your friends. Yourself, your taste, your furniture, your children, all are charming! That is his word. A pirouetting ballet-girl does not fall back more surely on the tips of her toes than does Colonel Pascal after every little flight of social rhetoric upon the word "charming." Delightful weather, wonderful weather, Italian sky, Claude Loraine scenery—charming! Exquisite woman, shoulders of alabaster, statuesque throat—a waist, an ankle—charming! His daughters have nicknamed him "the Prince Charming."

"I don't know whether I do right to marry Mr. Chamberlayne," said Leah, in a moment of expansion, shortly after she accepted poor Jack. "But I am quite certain I do right to get away from papa. Deb's home will be with me; Naomi, with her face, is sure to find a home of her own, and the Prince Charming will be unincumbered. What charming daughters we shall all be—for conversational purposes; what pegs for reminiscent sentiment when he knows that he is rid

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of us for over." So little valued are men's social virtues, even the geniality of a Prince Charming, when seen in the fierce light that beats around their own fireside.

A quarter to seven; five minutes to seven; at three minutes before the hour Leah enters the salon full dressed, the smile that a pretty woman puts on with her bracelets round her lips. Colonel Pascal gazes at her with honest pride; *his* daughter, his darling motherless girl on the brink of a hundred thousand pounds—and well he may. Never has Leah looked handsomer. Her arms bared to the shoulders, her delicate classic bust, shine like marble amidst the billowy laces and tulles of her amber silk dress; her bright hair lifted high from her forehead, is ornamented by a single yellow rose; her complexion, whose one fault, ordinarily, if fault it be, is want of colour, is heightened to-night into vividest carmine and snow. Colonel Pascal thinks of his wife—the lovely gentle-souled wife, whose heart he broke, and sighs; lifts his handkerchief, even, to the tip of his well-cut little hawk nose.

"That dress becomes you marvellously, Leah. You have the same charming taste as your poor dear mamma. My beloved Esther always chose those faint shades of amber and citron as you do."

Leah walks up to her father's side and surveys herself coolly in the glass.

"I have too much of you in my face, papa dear, to be really like her." What a change comes into her voice when she speaks to him. You could scarce believe it the same voice that softened and pleaded to Danton six hours ago. "Turn and look now, a little more profile—there? Did you ever see such a duplicate in your life, barring the mustache?"

The likeness is extraordinary, taking the features from one point of view, and with Leah, for the nonce, counterfeiting her father's expression—an expression that I only know how to describe adequately by the French term *fripon*.

"I hope the likeness is but skin-deep, my child," observes Prince Charming, sentimentally. "I trust you will make more of your life, be less heavily weighted, than your poor old father has been."

It is a favourite figure of speech with Colonel Pascal, this of being "heavily weighted"; a vague convenient phrase, by which he throws all the little shortcomings of his life upon circumstances.

"I hope Bonchrétien will give us an eatable dinner," says Leah. "Three francs a head, extra, does not leave much margin for entrées and game. We might have given five francs, I think, papa, when we were about it."

The mention of francs brings Colonel Pascal home briskly from the regions of sentiment to those of facts.

"Three francs a head extra, mind, *extra*—there is the regular sub-

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scription of the house to start upon—three francs a head, extra, ought to enable Madame Bonchrétien to send up as handsome a dinner as can be served in Paris, and make a good profit for herself into the bargain. You really forget my means, Leah, when you talk so recklessly, the heavy inroads I have been making upon capital already for your trousseau."

"But the trousseau will be your last expense, papa dear," says the girl, looking at him with coldly glittering eyes. "When the wedding breakfast is paid for, and the cheap champagne, and the narrow white ribbon for the favours, I shall have cost you my last sixpence, remember. Mr. Chamberlayne will henceforth have the exclusive legal privilege of dressing, supporting, adorning, or burying me, as the case may be."

"A wedding is a deuced expensive thing under any circumstances," says Colonel Pascal uneasily. He and Leah do not love each other, know that they do not love each other, at the best of times. There is something in the expression of her face at this moment that is singularly distasteful to him. "I wrote to Turnbull Brothers this morning, telling them to sell out another couple of hundred pounds, and even that will not half carry me through. If you were marrying a poor man—on my soul, Leah, if you were marrying a poor man it would be a much less costly business to me."

"And to me, too, perhaps," says Leah, with sudden pathos in her voice. Then, rallying quickly, "But if I can pay you back," she adds, "if I can pay you back, as I have agreed to do, you will be no loser in the end. The expenses of the sale—the wedding, I mean—are heavy, of course, but if I can make it good to you out of Jack's money hereafter, I will."

"And in the meantime"—Colonel Pascal draws a dingy bit of paper from his pocket, unfolds, and holds it to the light—"this is not the time, perhaps, for domestic discussions, still, as we are talking of expenditure, the matter may as well be settled—in the meantime, I really must request less extravagance in the children's washing bills. Now, last week," he adjusts his gilt double eyeglass, and goes over the items carefully, "'petticoats, tuckers, handkerchiefs, stockings'—here we are—'stockings.' Seven pairs of stockings, between those two children, in one week!"

Well for him, perhaps, that he looks so steadily at the paper, that he does not read the expression of his daughter's eyes; such absolute, scarce-veiled contempt as those eyes discover! Leah is mercenary, if you will, but on a big scale; mercenary for the sake of all that money brings, rather than for money itself; is bartering her youth for a hundred thousand pounds, but means to spend them; is mercenary, not a niggard. Perhaps I ought to write, is twenty, not fifty-five. Age makes such a world of difference in the character of our vices.

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"And this sort of thing invariably goes from bad to worse. Give them seven pairs one week, they will want ten the next. Are you attending to me, Leah," she is tossing her fan to and fro with an air of the most impenetrable calmness, "or are you not?"

"I am attending to every word, papa. You wish the children to wear dirtier stockings. I will tell them so."

"I wish them to grow up without your ruinous indifference to money. I wish them to feel that they are the children of a miserably poor man. Seven pair a week!—it beats me to know how they could have contrived to put them all on!"

"If you recollect, the weather was rainy, papa. It cannot have been Deb; I am afraid, poor Debbie does not go out enough to get her feet wet! But Naomi, you can hardly expect a girl of Naomi's age to be seen in splashed stockings."

"If Naomi looked where she was going she need not be splashed at all. I can walk from one end of the boulevards to the other, without a spot on my boots."

"You are a few years older than Naomi, sir."

"I am, and I will employ the wisdom those few years have taught me by bringing up my children in habits of self-control, as honourable members of society. If Deb and Naomi want more than two pairs of stockings a week each, they must wash them themselves, and"——

The door opens with a flourish, and Prince Charming, all embroidery, diamond studs, smiles, and decorations, advances to receive his future son-in-law.

Chapter VII.

LEAH'S PRIZE IN THE LOTTERY.

A hectic little young man of four and twenty, smooth-cheeked as a woman, fair-haired, honest-eyed, and still with the vacant wasted look about his face of one whose life, moral and physical, has already run to ruin. His language is slang, his dress loud, his manner towards men that of an overgrown schoolboy, towards ladies, simply execrable; but then, from his cradle upwards, Jack Chamberlayne has been familiar with every phase of attractive society, *save* that of ladies. Such is Leah's lover.

He walks up to her side, giving Colonel Pascal a couple of fingers on the way, and, standing so close that his beloved must, perforce, inhale the atmosphere of tobacco and millefleurs that enshrouds him, looks her and her dress critically up and down, as a man might do a newly-bought horse of whose paces he is doubtful, then expresses his sense of mingled fear and admiration by a whistle. At which stroke of humour Colonel Pascal, the most fastidious Chesterfield save when a hundred thousand pounds are at stake, laughs pleasantly.

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Children will be children; and what are these two young things, so soon to be made one, but boy and girl—April daisies, innocent lambkins of the spring!

Leah shudders and draws away. A new phase of their mutual lives has commenced, silently, unknown to either, in this moment.

The "guests" descend from their various apartments on the upper floors, the dinner bell sounds, and Prince Charming, as honorary host or master of the house, gives his arm to the Comtesse, a miracle of soft lace and grey silk and fine little high-bred smiles and courtesies. Jack Chamberlayne, sorely against his grain, is apportioned to Mrs. Tom-son, stiff as buckram, in plum-coloured satin, and with what the French call "ribbons that swear," depending from her head and shoulders. Naomi and Deb, in painfully fresh muslins and silk stockings (does Prince Charming behold the washing-bill of the future as he glances at those stockings amidst all the gas-lit grandeur?). Naomi and Deb are both conducted to the dining-room for the first time in their lives like introduced young ladies; Mr. Pettingall and old Major Macnamurdo, their cavaliers. Lord Stair, as the happy result of these combinations, takes Leah.

It is the first time he has seen Jack Chamberlayne's betrothed in evening dress, none of Leah's Paris dissipations having as yet soared higher than a theatre or concert; and before they reach the bottom of the staircase she has learnt what kind of sensation an arm and bust like hers will be likely to produce on jaded London eyes next spring. Whatever his other demerits, Lord Stair, to do him justice, has the knack invariably of leading back Leah Pascal's heart to its rightful allegiance; of reconciling her, I mean, to her engagement and to Jack Chamberlayne.

The chiefs of the establishment await the company in the dining-room; Bonchrétien, in a decent black dress, well made, with a decent black lace coiffure on her head, diffuse of attentions to every one, but as thoroughly self-possessed as though she were a duchess of the old faubourg—a Frenchwoman, in short. Miss Smith has put on a chignon, tacked down a faded green silk—her one company dress—round the throat, and adorned herself with a necklace of cheap pearls. She has also superintended the making of the sweet dishes, and is a good deal flushed about the face from the work. "Cette pauvre chère Smeet, who fagote herself like a chiffonière endimanchée," says Madame, compassionately: Madame never loses a chance of compassionating Miss Smith's modest efforts at rejuvenescence.

"I arrange the table for thirteen." Bonchrétien whispers this as Leah and Lord Stair go by. "But M. Danton comes not, and it is already five minutes past the hour. I bid Désiré remove the cover of M. Danton?"

"Yes—no—do as you choose," is Leah's answer. "If M. Danton

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comes, room can be made for him; if not, twelve is a luckier number any day than thirteen."

She passes along, smiling, on Lord Stair's arm, and is in her wildest, her most brilliant spirits throughout the dinner—her heart beating every time a fiacre rattles down the Rue Castiglione, or the heavy house door rolls to and fro on its hinges. Jack Chamberlayne, who is on the opposite side of the table, thinks he never before saw his beloved look so handsome; and under the influence of her eyes, and of papa's wine, whispers many amative confidences into Mrs. Tom-son's startled ear before the conclusion of the meal.

Out of fairness to Colonel Pascal, I must state that the wines are authentic, almost the only time of his life when as much could be said for him. In all common cases of hospitality Prince Charming treats his friends to the ordinary wine of the house, carefully deposited on wicker sledges for the occasion. For the wedding dinner, even, he is negotiating with his wine-merchant about some delightfully cheap and heady drug to be administered to the guests in the shape of champagne. Will not that champagne be drunk *after* the irrevocable "I wills" are spoken? But to-night Colonel Pascal feels like a father, and bestows wines that are wines, blessings that are blessings, upon his future son-in-law.

Good wines, good plats; an adoring lover opposite; a friend whispering praises of one's beauty, assurances of his own devotion, at one's side! Leah gradually attends less to the rattling of the fiacres, grows callous as to the opening and shutting of the front door. Her fancy for Danton (I avail myself of Lord Stair's phrase) is, out and out, the strongest emotion her life has hitherto known—is in the stage when a breath, when anything, nothing, may blow it into passion! And still, should Danton not cross her path again, I believe she might get over the fancy in twenty-four hours—aided by an extraordinarily becoming pair of new earrings, perhaps in twelve. Quinine in ague, absence in love; and these maladies we know, if taken in time, are curable. Leah, at all events, is of far too pleasure-loving a temperament to be superior to such anodynes as plats and wines and flattery, even were she much harder hit than is at present the case. Primitive and loyal natures may be found to whom Love, when he has once entered, is all in all. A palace or a garret, as the gods think fit to provide, so long as the object beloved be there! Leah, in the present stage of her moral development, would be glad to have a lover like Danton, just as she would be glad to have any other pleasant things of life; but she would be glad of him with all the accessories that money can give, and failing the lover could console herself with the accessories. I repeat—"in the present stage of her moral development." Till yesterday, remember, she had never troubled herself even to speculate upon the meaning of the word "love."

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Danton comes not; but the food and wines are good, and Leah is looking, and knows that she is looking, her handsomest, and her spirits suffer no eclipse. After dinner enter a couple of oldish young men, friends of Colonel Pascal's, pour faire les frais. Friends, do I say? Casual acquaintance of yesterday—the Prince Charming has no friends. Oldish-young men, without ostensible means of livelihood; bachelors, it may be presumed; picked up at a restaurant, on the pavement; picked up cheaply anywhere! Needy gentlemen, irreproachable as to manners and shirt-fronts, who sing a little, dance a little, play cards a little—and wear chains of eighteen-carat brass. Every foreign city abounds in stray utility men of this calibre and of British origin. Colonel Pascal delights in entertaining upon what he calls the easy French system. No way like the French way for promoting real sociability. You pay people just as much compliment in asking them to spend the evening with you as in asking them to dine—at the expense of a glass of sugar water. He is charmed to see his two friends (though a little uncertain as to which name belongs to which man), charmed to present them to his prospective son-in-law, and to his daughter, and his second daughter. Whereupon Miss Naomi, for the first time in her life presented to any one, lifts her eyelashes, and slays both of the casual acquaintance with her beauty on the instant. These poor gentlemen are absolutely without consequence from a commercial point of view—shirt-fronts and manners the extent, probably, of their worldly possessions. Still, a pauper may serve as a beauty-test as well as an elder son, "golden through and through;" and it warms Colonel Pascal's paternal heart to see the looks of admiration that his second daughter calls forth. Leah splendidly married, Naomi safe to follow in her footsteps, only Deb's washing bills left to pay during the intervals, few, it may be presumed, when the little girl will not be visiting her elder sisters. . . . The satisfaction good men feel at the successful close of all honest endeavour, glows on Prince Charming's face. He compliments Madame on the general serving of the dinner, compliments Miss Smith on the sweets. He falls into little affecting paternal tableaux whenever either of his children comes across him—you may be sure they never come across him, save by accident! He smiles, that frozen smile of January sunshine, on everybody.

Now, how will the young people pass the evening? To dance there are too few; and Mr. Chamberlayne does not care for dancing—drawing-room dancing. Conversation? Jack is not great at conversation, unless he can repose his feet a couple of inches higher than his chin, and smoke incessant short pipes as he talks; and then his themes are not precisely drawing-room ones. Flirtation? But Leah must not flirt with her own affianced lover, and certainly must not flirt with anybody else—it will be quite as well when she and

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Lord Stair have done puzzling over that solitaire-board in the corner. Music?

"Yes, to be sure, let us have some music," cries little Deb, catching at her father's last proposal. "Jack, you will play for us, won't you? Leah, Jack is going to play 'The Ten Little Niggers.' Will you and Lord Stair please to attend?"

Mr. Chamberlayne's solitary accomplishment is that of evolving sounds that, among intimate friends, pass for tunes, from his own chin. This accomplishment, learned it may be assumed, in some of the lowest London music halls, has a weird, repulsive fascination for little Deb. Drawing up a stool close to her future brother-in-law's knee, she plants her small figure thereupon, and with her face resting between her hands, sits spell-bound; her dark eyes expressing mingled wonder, admiration, and contempt, as she fixes them intently upon the performer's face.

Jack's is not an intellectual countenance, at any time, and with the forehead held well back, and the chin protruding, as he raps upon it with his meagre knuckles, he forms about as striking an illustration of the great Darwinian theory as could be imagined. Leah's attention to her game of dual solitaire becomes more riveted than ever.

"Capital, indeed, capital!" remarks Colonel Pascal, when the exhibition terminates; for once in his life the Prince Charming's lips refuse to give utterance to any of his favourite superlatives, "A most—um—ah, fatiguing performance, I am sure. Deborah, my dear, you ought not to give our good friend so much trouble."

"But Jack plays on his chin to amuse his own self," cries Miss Deb. "When he was waiting for Leah to get ready yesterday, I came in and caught him playing 'Oh Jemima,' didn't I, Jack? and no one but old Mrs. Wynch in the room."

"When I am waiting for Leah to get ready I am glad to commit any foolery," says Mr. Chamberlayne. "Three-quarters of an hour every time a woman puts on her bonnet, is a pretty good strain on a fellow's patience."

The incipient growl matrimonial is in his voice; and in a second the solitaire board is pushed aside, and Leah has flitted across the salon to his side.

"If I am three-quarters of an hour now, when I am on my best behaviour," she whispers, "what shall I be hereafter, when I am on no behaviour at all? There is an interesting sum in the rule of three for your wise old brain to work out."

He is over head and ears in love with her (I apologize to Love; but language is limited, custom arbitrary: we must use, not the literal, but the French-polish name for things!) and the word "hereafter," spoken as Leah speaks it, with Leah's breath upon his cheek,

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touches whatever softer emotion Jack Chamberlayne's heart is capable of. He returns her whisper by one that makes her cheek flush. Mrs. Amiral Tom-son, seated beside Madame de Miramion on a distant sofa, raises her handkerchief to her eyes. Mrs. Tom-son, like Jack Chamberlayne, has partaken of as much wine as she can manage, and is now in the stage of semi-tearful, semi-amative retrospection, when the sight of a pair of happy lovers is too much for her nervous system.

"During twenty-two years, twenty-two blessed years, me and Tom-son was all in all to each other." Alas!—verity in wine—where is the fine grammar of the Admiral's widow now? "Love—it wasn't love, it was dotage!"

"So I should imagine, madame," remarks the icy old comtesse, moving a couple of inches further towards her own end of the sofa.

The dinner hour was seven; by eleven o'clock not even Leah's smiles can keep Jack Chamberlayne any longer from yawning piteously and aloud. "Music, who cares for music?" he cries at last, waxing desperate. One of the casual acquaintance has been treating the company to a lachrymose English ballad, 'Absent,' or 'Away,' or 'Always,' the kind of ditty gentlemen of his class habitually sing at evening parties, before supper. "What we want is some fun—dressing up, or acting or that—something to set us all laughing. What do you say, Naomi, and you, Deb? Oh, Leah's too fine of course!" This with a glance at his betrothed, across the back of whose chair Lord Stair is now bending. "Leah don't like practical jokes, thinks them low. So we'll just have a lark by ourselves, we three."

Deb and Naomi, nothing loth, jump at the proposal, and away they all run, helter-skelter, upstairs. Half an hour later they re-enter: poor little Deb as a devil, in scarlet, with well corked face, with twisted paper horns; Jack, as a chambermaid, with rouged cheeks, in a cap and bed-gown; and Naomi, beautiful Naomi, with her hair turned up under a chimneypot hat, and in a suit of her father's Bond Street clothes, from chin to toe.

"Afraid of the governor," said Jack, when the children hesitated, awe-struck before the proposal of rifling Colonel Pascal's wardrobe. "Why, what is there to be afraid of in him? Catch the old sinner losing his temper when I am by. Oh, Leah will blow you up, will she? Take my word for it, Leah won't blow anyone up till after the ceremony on Wednesday, eighteenth instant, six o'clock, P.M."

The travesties are well carried out. For a moment no one recognizes either of the three mummies; then—then everybody seems to become suddenly deadened, and looks uncomfortably at his nearest neighbour to see how the jest shall be taken. The sudden bursting of a practical joke among any party of human creatures above the age

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of ten (unless the human creatures be Jack Chamberlaynes) seldom fails to bring about this state of universal flatness and depression. Even Colonel Pascal's practised smile does not come at command to his lips.

"Naomi, my dear Naomi, you are really getting too old for such rough play, and Chamberlayne—most diverting, really, ha, ha! most diverting, but"——

"What we want is champagne, Governor," cries Jack, clapping Colonel Pascal smartly on the shoulder; the only man living, I should say, who has ever done as much. "Why, hang it all, everyone is as dull as ditch-water. Give us some champagne, and we will have a dance. None of your quadrilles or Lancers—a good, honest cancan, and I'll take Mrs. Amiral for my partner! Lord!" sotto voce, "won't I make the old girl spin!"

The situation is trying, is, perhaps, the very crucial trial of all that Colonel Pascal's spirit has had to go through during Leah's engagement. Refuse Jack Chamberlayne he dare not; give him cheap champagne, he dare not. The wretched man, far gone though he be, may yet be sober enough to know good wine from bad.

"My dear Madame Bonchrétien, I am ashamed to trouble you, but if you would let us have one bottle of your excellent Epernay. It is charming, really, to see young persons in such fine spirits, charming."

But not so charming to see the same fine-spirited young persons drinking champagne out of tumblers, and, which is worse, inciting other persons to do the same. Down runs smiling Madame with her keys, up comes Désiré with a single bottle of champagne and half a dozen glasses. The wine does not go round the room.

"Apportez encore—moitié douzaine champagne," cries Jack, in his vile French. "And more glasses—big ones. Debbie, what's the French for 'more glasses'? Why, we are only just beginning the evening."

He drinks freely, helps the old ladies and gentlemen, the two pauper guests, with a lavish hand, orders Désiré about as if he were in a tavern. Colonel Pascal sinks in a sort of stupor into an easy chair and watches it all. Champagne at ten francs a bottle, and men picked up on the pavement—men invited to a cup of tea, and to be out of the house again in an hour—drinking it like table beer!

Thank heaven, next Wednesday and the parsons will convert this madman, irrevocably, into a son-in-law! Thank heaven, to-night is the very last time, in this mortal life, that he, Colonel Pascal, can ever be called upon to entertain him!

By-and-by tongues begin to loosen. The Epernay has done its work. Then one of the pauper guests, he who sang, volunteers to play, and the dancing commences. Jack dances with all the old ladies in turn, singly, two, three together. He carries Miss Smith off

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her legs; succeeds, by force, in teaching Mrs. Amiral Tom-son the cancan (Debbie tells Naomi, in sacred confidence, that she saw him kiss Mrs. Amiral Tom-son in the back drawing-room). His wild spirits are contagious. Even Lord Stair, at last, puts his arm round Miss Pascal's slender waist.

"We have been wise long enough, Leah. Chamberlayne is right; let us make an evening of it. When you are with children, act like children."

"Or with madmen, like madmen."

So answers Leah laconically. She waltzes with Lord Stair, notwithstanding. The pauper, in a rattling, champagnish fashion, plays well. Madame's carpetless floor is, for dancing purposes, irreproachable. Lord Stair, in his day one of the best waltzers in Europe, is an admirable partner still, as long as the pace is moderate and the waltz not too long. And Leah, in spite of some inward shame, cannot help enjoying herself. Her cheeks flush, her bright hair falls, a little disordered, round her throat. At last, with her two hands clasped on Lord Stair's arm, her eyes upturned to Lord Stair's face, she pauses to recover her breath, just opposite the open door of the front salon; Jack, who has whirled all the old ladies into a state of collapse, Jack, in his female travesty, with his rouged cheeks, his music-hall palpably vinous demeanour, at her side, fanning her.

Thus Leah stands. Thus Danton, quietly making his way up the stairs, candlestick in hand, sees his Fate again.

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Rubens and Vandyck in England.

The residence of Rubens in England was a mere episode of a few months in a brilliant artist life. That of Anthony Vandyck was a considerable portion of that life itself. Here are some brief illustrations of the "business connections" of both artists with England and Englishmen.

The first interview between Rubens and an Englishman took place at Antwerp, in 1612, when the artist was five-and-thirty years of age. This visitor was an alchymist. "If," he said, "you will only build and furnish a laboratory, I will make gold for you. I have discovered the great secret." "And I," answered Rubens, "have discovered the secret of making it for myself;" as he spoke, he pointed to his palette and pencils, and the alchymist took his leave in disgust.

Three or four years later, Carleton, English ambassador at the Hague, despatched George Gage and Toby Matthew to Antwerp with a chain of diamonds of the modest value of fifty pounds. Rubens had just finished a hunting piece, and Carleton hoped to buy it with those diamonds. When Carleton's agents presented themselves to Rubens, Gage discovered that he had left the chain at Brussels. Rubens would make no bargain till the precious stones were in his hands; especially as he valued his picture at some thirty pounds more than they valued the diamonds. While the English agents returned to Brussels in quest of the jewels, the Duke of Arschot stept in and bought Rubens' work for a hundred pounds. The King of Bavaria would not *now* part from it for countless hundreds.

Sir Dudley Carleton was angry, but Gage told him that so huge a picture (18 feet by 12 feet) would be fittingly hung only in huge palaces. The diamond chain was then shaken before Rubens' eyes, and to such purpose that he undertook to accept it for a small hunting piece, promising that it should be entirely from his own hand, and that Snyders should not draw the hair of a single animal upon it. Toby Matthew, when the work was completed, gave an ecstatic account of it to Carleton. "The beasts are all alive, and in act either of escape or resistance, in the expressing whereof Snyders doth come infinitely short of Rubens, and Rubens saith that he should take it in ill part if I should compare Snyders with him in that point."

Rubens "is the Apelles of our time"—so wrote Swert to Camden,

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the antiquary, whom Rubens afterwards called "Our worthy friend." A year or so later, the artist was addressing Carleton as "My most respected patron." Rubens was negotiating an exchange of pictures by his own hand (works worth six thousand florins) for Carleton's "statues and antiques." "I have at present in my house the very flower of my pictorial stock, particularly some pictures which I have retained for my own enjoyment; nay, I have some repurchased for more than I had sold them to others." Then, he names a dozen pictures "mostly done by my hand," with here and there an animal put in by Snyders, or with the landscape (to the 'Leopards taken from life with Satyrs and Nymphs') "done by the hand of a master skilful in that department." Some are described as "begun by my scholars," but re-touched all over, so as to make them virtually "originals." Rubens noticed one piece especially, a "Crucifixion, large as life, esteemed, perhaps, the best thing I have ever done." He valued it at five hundred florins, say fifty pounds. The dimensions were 12 feet by 6 feet. "Too large," said the ambassador, "for the low buildings at the Hague, and for those also of England." Lord Danvers found Hatton House too small for one picture, at least, sent over by Rubens. In a letter, written in 1619, he asks Carleton to change it for a smaller work by the same artist in his own collection. "For our rooms are little in this cold country of England, and pleasing pieces to stand ten feet high suit best with our clime."

With severe firmness of character there was a fine touch of the courtier in Rubens. He throws in a trifle, a sketch worth one hundred florins, with the purchases made of him by Carleton, "knowing," as the painter writes, "the importance of preserving the good graces of a person of your condition." Yet Toby Matthew calls Rubens a cruel, courteous painter, "who stuck to his prices; though George Gage holds more authority over him than any man I know." Among the pictures painted for the English ambassador, was a 'Susannah.' Rubens describes it as a *galanteria*, which he will finish, by the Divine will, by a stated time. "Please God," he says, he will make it so that it "ought to be beautiful enough to enamour old men."

When Prince Charles gave his first commission to Rubens, the Prince's gallery contained but one picture by that artist. It was a 'Judith and Holofernes,' which Rubens himself once disowned, but afterwards recognised as one of his youthful works. Prince Charles's commission was for a 'Hunt,' but when the picture was finished, Charles refused to take it, on the ground that Rubens' hand was not to be seen in it. Experienced judges agreed with Charles, and cried *shame!* on the artist who passed his 'prentices' work for his own. The artist condemned himself by painting a fresh 'Hunt' for the Prince. He subsequently painted a 'Creation' for the same patron;

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but when Toby Matthew unrolled it in London, the colours were blurred and intermixed, the picture having been rolled up for carriage before the colours were dry. "I wouldn't hang up such a thing," said Toby, "even if Rubens gave it me for nothing!" The *Grand Monarque* would have said the same of the best works both of Rubens and Rembrandt.

Rubens was more than unlucky with another picture on the same subject. When Carleton commissioned him to paint a 'Creation' for the Prince of Wales, Rubens especially inquired if the picture was to be entirely from his own hand. Carleton made no answer; but when the work was returned, because "in every painter's opinion he had sent a piece scarce touched by his own hand, and the postures so forced as the prince will not admit the picture into his gallery," Rubens frankly confessed to Lord Danvers, who wrote the letter from which the above passage is an extract, that he had employed his assistants in it, adding that if it had been the work of his own hand only, "it would be well worth twice as much."* Very graciously, however, did he take the rejected work, and engage, "on the word of a gentleman," that on the new picture to be painted in its place, no hand but his own should be engaged.

It is curious, however, to see that Rubens did not invariably hold cheap the aid he received from others. Writing to Sir Dudley Carleton, he says:—"It is a subject neither sacred nor profane, although taken from Holy Writ: namely, Sarah in the act of scolding Hagar, who, pregnant, is leaving the house in a feminine and graceful manner, assisted by the Patriarch Abram." (What a graceful apology, by the way, instantly follows, for not having finished the picture himself). "I have engaged, as is my custom, a very skilful man in his pursuit, to finish the landscape, solely to augment the enjoyment of Y. E." [Y. E. signifying *Your Excellency.*†]

Carleton was an English patron, on whom the Flemish painters looked with pleasant expectation. It was not only Rubens who sought his "good graces," Vranckz, Snyders, and Breughel, obtained that gracious guerdon, and submitted to a reduction of the low price at which they put the rich samples of their genius. When we hear of the English ambassador purchasing a Breughel for twelve and fourteen pounds, a Vranckz for ten, and Snyders taking twelve pounds for a piece for which he had asked a hundred crowns, Toby Matthew might well say that Carleton would have thrice the worth of his money; while Gage suggested their value in his own way, by imploring his patron not to keep the pictures long rolled up before hanging them, as such neglect would "prejudice the colours." Toby rightly thinks,

* Papers Illus. Life of Rubens. Edit. W. N. Sainsbury.
† 'Modern Painters.' Vol. IV. By J. Ruskin, M.A.

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that for a work by "the rarest man living in Lantscape"—"a matter of twenty crowns would be well bestowed."

It was while Rubens was at the Luxembourg, that Buckingham recognised in him not only the accomplished painter but the skilful diplomatist. In 1621, negotiations were opened with him for painting the ceiling in the New Banqueting House in Whitehall. The idea of such work gratified him. "With respect to the hall in the New Palace," he wrote to Trumbull, "I confess myself to be, by a natural instinct, better fitted to execute works of the largest size rather than little curiosities. Every one according to his gifts. My endowments are of such a nature that I have never wanted courage to undertake any design, however vast in size, or diversified in subject."

The work was deferred for a time. Meanwhile, Rubens continued to pursue his brilliant vocation successfully, even in times of great public disorder. When only a young man of eight-and-twenty, the authorities of his native state had entrusted him on a diplomatic mission to Spain (A.D. 1605), during which he painted as many great works as he signed despatches, and "snubbed" the King of Portugal, who had invited him to Lisbon, and, terrified at the expense of entertaining such a celebrated personage, stopped his intended guest at nearly the close of his journey, and turned him with his face towards Spain. In 1629, the war of the United Provinces of the Netherlands against Spain, in the consequences of which England and Denmark were involved, became a matter which it was the interest of all parties to bring to a close. Buckingham sent Gerbier to speak with Rubens on this subject. Here there were two artists, one of whom had failed in his vocation, employed in settling the peace of Europe! In May 1629, Rubens left the Hispano-Netherlandic Court of Brussels, from which he was deputed, for Dunkirk. He waited there, in some fear of Dutch emissaries, and of the Dutch vessels before the town, till a ship of war, of considerable force, should be sent to carry him to England. He would return to Brussels, he said, unless such conveyance were provided for him. The King was willing to gratify him. On the 24th of May, Captain John Manners, of the *Adventurer*, lying off Dunkirk, "received on board a gentleman who is coming towards his Majesty, and landed him that same night at Dover." So wrote the captain (who knew nothing of the value of the freight he carried) to the Lords of the Admiralty. Two days later, Rubens safely reached Greenwich, two days before peace was proclaimed with Flanders. His success as a diplomatist may be inferred from the complaints of those who were interested in obstructing it. They said he had no credentials; that his warrant was all by word of mouth, and that he paid diplomatists with the sorry coin of *palabras*. France did him the honour of being jealous of his palavers; and England was

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proud of the utterer, both as a gentleman and an artist. Cambridge testified her admiration especially, by inviting him down with a noble company, and, with much pomp of circumstance, creating him a Master of Arts.

From Rubens' letters, we learn his opinion of England with respect to Art; an opinion which places the kingdom in a creditable position. When the painter met Buckingham abroad, he thought the English nobleman capricious and arrogant; and he felt compassion for the young King who was being driven, with his kingdom, by evil counsel into perils which Rubens saw from afar.* After the painter had seen England, the King, and the royal and noble collections, he spoke in terms of the highest praise of all. "This island," he wrote to Dupay, "appears to me to be every way worthy of exciting the interest of a man of taste; not merely on account of the pleasantness of the country and the style of national beauty; not only because of an external appearance which seems to me to indicate the utmost good taste, and which denotes a people rich and happy in the bosom of peace, but still more on the grounds of the incredible number of excellent pictures, statues, and ancient inscriptions which are to be found at Court." With court and country, the great artist was equally pleased, as may be seen from a phrase in a letter to Peirese, in 1629. "One is far from meeting in this island with the rudeness that might be expected from its climate—remote as it is from delicious Italy—and it must be confessed, with regard to painting, that I have never anywhere seen such a collection of master-pieces as in the King's palace and in the gallery of the late Duke of Buckingham."

His work in England between the end of May 1629 and the last week of February 1630, was not extensive. It included some designs for Whitehall and the great picture of 'Peace and War,' for the King's collection. This last work, after the dispersion of the Royal gallery, found its way into that of the Dorias, at Genoa, where it was absurdly named, 'The Rubens Family!' Subsequently, it fell by purchase, to the first Duke of Sutherland, who bequeathed it to the National Gallery, of which it is now one of the most brilliant ornaments. If Charles was graciously pleased with the artist, Rubens was not less sensible of the condescension of the King. When he heard of the birth of the Prince of Wales, in May 1630, Rubens wrote to Lord Dorchester (the Dudley Carleton of earlier days), "I confess the extreme eagerness that I have to be and to appear a very zealous servant of the King of Great Britain, had transported me to some excess, if the outward disposition of the State, at present, had in any wise permitted me!"

Previously to this, in February 1630, the King took from Gerbier

* 'Lettres Inédites de Rubens.' Edit. Gachat.

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a cordon of diamonds (for a hatband) and a ring, which His Majesty presented to the happy painter. Gerbier's fears that he would never be paid for the costly ware which had been taken from him were quieted by the warrant he received on the Treasury for the payment of £500 for the diamonds, and of £128 2*s.* 11*d.* for the keep of Rubens, his brother-in-law Brandt, and their men, from the 7th of December, 1629, to the 22nd of February, 1630. Gerbier had complained to Cottington that he had not received a stiver for his outlay during the nine months he had been entrusted with "keeping" the above guests; and "God knows," he exclaims, "when the desired payment would be made." Gerbier was satisfied, and the King showed how completely he had forgotten that Rubens had ever tried to pass the work of other artists for his own. The condonation, at least, was perfected in the graceful scene which was enacted in the gallery at Whitehall before Rubens departed. The King had secretly promised to confer on him the honour of knighthood, and some fear was entertained lest the royal memory should prove defective. It did not fail. Charles carried in his hand a sword, the hilt of which was studded with diamonds. On meeting Rubens he bade the artist kneel, and, touching him on the shoulder with the brilliant weapon, told him to "rise Sir Peter Paul." Thrusting the blade into the sheath, he presented the weapon as a parting gift to the artist, who retired from the gallery richer by title and gift, and by the addition to his arms "on a canton gules, a *lion* or." The passport handed to him to assure his going in safety ordered that free passage, without let or hindrance, should be given "to Sir Peter Paul Rubens, his gentlemen, servants, trunks of apparel, and other things that he hath to travel with him, without search." The journey homeward, however, was not made without obstruction.

At the port of embarkation, Dover, a dozen young women and boys were gathered, whose presence troubled the authorities. They had no permits to leave the kingdom, but they hoped to pass on board under the protection of Rubens; if not, in the suit of the Spanish ambassador, with whom the painter travelled. Coke warned the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports to look to the matter; and when the group thought their opportunity had come, they were prohibited from leaving the kingdom by the warden's officials. The Spanish ambassador asserted that they were only a young gentlewoman (going abroad to be married) with her servants; but Secretary Coke told Secretary Dorchester that he was informed that the young women were being sent abroad with good portions to be put into nunneries, and the boys into schools of the Jesuits. "Tell me their real names," said Coke, "and I will move the Lords of the Council to grant them passports." The proud ambassador said he would "communicate only with the King." And therewith artist and ambassador had to depart,

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leaving in Dover the young ladies and lads whom the government wished to save from convents and Jesuit schools.

Rubens carried with him from London the sketches he had made for the pictures he was to execute for the Banquetting House. In his studio at Antwerp he and Jordaens, and probably some pupils of both, addressed themselves to and accomplished the work. As neither instructions nor money came from England, Rubens, as soon as the colours were dry, rolled up the canvasses and placed them in a corner of his painting-room.

The artist was to have received three thousand pounds for his labour in August, 1634. As weeks and months passed on, the rolled-up canvases in Rubens' study became a subject of scornful raillery for the fine French, Spanish, Dutch, and German gentlemen who resorted thither, carrying gossip to and from the town. Was the King of England too poor to pay a miserable three thousand pounds for such master-work? Gerbier wrote to Charles, out of very shame at the scandal that was going on, and at length, in 1635, orders arrived from England for the transfer of the paintings. When Rubens unrolled the canvasses to take a last glance at them, he found that the colours were so cracked through being rolled up too soon, and continuing so for a year, as to require a repainting of nearly the whole surface. Although this was done at his own house, it is uncertain how much of it was the work of his own hand. At last the pictures were despatched from Antwerp by Dunkirk; they reached England in October, 1635. Rubens parted from them without receiving even an instalment of his honorarium. He had intended to come to England himself to superintend the placing of his work in Whitehall; but he was "too desperate sick," he wrote, and sent a deputy "over on purpose" to see to the proper fixing of the pictures in their places.

It is not very clear when the debt of £3000 was acquitted. Among the payments made under the head of "anticipations," or sums charged upon future receipts of income, there is, "22nd May, 1637, Sir Peter Rubens £1500;" but in November of the same year Endymion Porter received from Charles and paid over to Lionel Wake for Rubens, and under the painter's authority, £800, which sum is there described as "in part payment of £3000 due to him by His Majesty for pictures."* Two years and a half elapsed before the whole sum was paid. The troubled times may bear the blame of Charles's dilatoriness, but did not impede an act of graceful courtesy on his part such as sovereigns then frequently performed. To pay a great artist with money only—even an artist on whom the King had laid the burden and honour of knighthood—was to fall

* Calend. State Papers. 1637. Edit. Bruce.

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short of what was due to a noble workman. Charles accordingly despatched to Rubens, in testimony of the royal approbation, a chain of gold weighing eighty-two ounces and a half. A gold chain of nearly seven pounds Troy weight was a noble present from such a king to such a painter; but it is much to be feared that the royal goldsmith was never paid for the costly article which he supplied.

Within half a century, the great work of Rubens in Whitehall was in a state of dilapidation. The deification of King James was undergoing mortal decay. In a work on 'Secret Service Money,'* it appears that in the second James's reign there was paid "To Parry Walton, for satisfaction of his extraordinary pains in repairing all the pictures in the ceiling in the Banquetting House, in Whitehall, £212." On the canvas on which Rubens, Jordaens, and assistants originally worked, which was "painted over," when unrolled, previous to being forwarded to England, and which was repaired, that is, "restored," in the modern, destructive sense, by Parry Walton, in 1685, faint traces must remain of the hand of the great artist whose name is given to the whole work.

The great master, however, is visible in every line of the 'St. George' which he painted for Charles, and which is now in the Queen's Gallery at Windsor. It is full of pleasant anachronisms. The scene is transferred from the East to the Thames, and the royal castle of Windsor itself is to be seen in the distance. Indeed, from the palace has ridden forth not St. George, but Charles the First, himself, in the properties of the saint. The dragon, whose home was in a Thames meadow, is characteristically submissive, and the King has his foot upon its neck as proudly as if it represented obstinate rebellion trodden out. The Cleodolinda is not the Oriental child of the King of Seline (Parsley). She is a French lady, daughter of that *vert galant* Henri Quatre, King of France and Navarre, and her name is Henrietta Maria. She is wife to the masquerading St. George, who gives to her the end of the girdle which she had presented to him, to bind the beast withal, with the air of returning a laced kerchief which he had had on loan, and was restoring with polite acknowledgments. Doubtless, the auxiliary personages are all modern individuals also. The ladies and children, shocked at the evidences of the beast's ferocity, the group of three, beginning to rejoice, yet not having ceased to fear, such as these were more common about Windsor, Brussels, or Paris, than about the Kingdom of Parsley. The 'Squire is a good squire of Rubens' day, not of the mediæval period, and the page knows more about Whitehall than Egypt or Cappadocia. The very angels, with palm and laurel for the conqueror's brow, look as lovely as the angels of a Hampton Court masque. Nevertheless, with all its anachronisms,

* Camd. Soc. Pub. Edit. Akerman.

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the picture is from the hand of the master. It connects him with England, is worthy of the hand that painted the 'Descent,' and it so pleased the King that it may have led him to send "little Taylor," his active agent, to Antwerp, to offer Rubens a pension if, "for his British Majesty's service, he would reside at Brussels and "correspond with England."*

In honours, in fame, and in vulgar payments, Rubens had had no grounds for dissatisfaction with Charles. The illustrious painter, however, if he did not stoop to cheat, was at least not unwilling to let his princely patron be cheated. There was, in Rubens' studio, a picture of the 'Escurial.' Charles heard of it, and desired to possess it. Some figures and minor details were wanting to complete the work; meanwhile, the question arose, was it by him in whose studio it occupied a conspicuous place? Rubens seems to have fenced with the question, for he at length wrote: "Seeing myself," says the ingenuous writer, "*prayed to speak the truth*, and not to deceive His Majesty of Great Britain, to whom I am under so many obligations, I confess the said picture is not by my hand, but entirely painted by one of the most common painters, called Verhulst, of this city" (Antwerp), "after my design made upon the spot. So that it is not worthy to appear among the marvels of the cabinet of His Majesty, who can always dispose absolutely of all that I have in the world, together with my person." These last fine words were *palabras;* the formal insincere servility of the times.

Meanwhile Henrietta Maria had a bower, or cabinet, at Greenwich, the bare walls and ceiling of which she would fain have covered by dainty hands. In all, great and small, two and twenty pictures were at first thought of, a work of two years, for which the Queen was willing to pay, or to promise, six hundred and eighty pounds. She would not have any artist know of her design, and she entered into no negotiation except with *foreign* artists, and then through agents, who were bound not to reveal the name of their principal. But the painters, seeing the agents, pretty well knew for whom these acted. Gerbier was at his wit's end to know whether Jordaens or Rubens would be the better artist to recommend, supposing their prices were the same. "They are both Dutchmen," he wrote, in 1640, to Norgate, "and not to seek to present robustrous, boistrous, drunken-headed imaginary gods; and of the two, most certainly Sir Peter Rubens is the gentilest in his representations; his landskips are more rare, and all other circumstances more proper." His criticism is not ill expressed. Rubens seems not to have known that Jordaens was his competitor, whose claim to rank so with him Rubens always strenuously denied. When he suspected it, his resentment was excited.

* Sainsbury.

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"Rubens is said to smell a rat," writes Gerbier, "and to express disgust." Gerbier's soul was vexed at the rival pretensions of the artists, and he ends one of his official notes with the cry: "In my Litany, I would say, of painters, deliver me!"

Jordaens had learnt much from Rubens, but he lacked the advantages Rubens had derived from travelling. Jordaens could only study foreign masters through copies and engravings; but he did that to magnificent purpose. He was expressive, truthful, sometimes too servilely so, brilliant, free, but with less genius, less nobleness, less taste, and less elegance than Rubens, in whom he excited some admiration and a little uneasiness. Jordaens was a rapid painter. His large picture of 'Pan and Syrens' was finished in six days. It was suggested by Gerbier, that Jordaens might dispatch two or three of the pictures together for inspection, "it being the custom of these painters to work by fits, and most part on two or three pieces at a time, according as colour serves them."

While it was yet undecided whether Jordaens or Rubens should be employed for the decoration of Greenwich Palace, the former sent a taste of his quality to Charles, who expressed his pleasure "that the painter Jordaens must be remembered to make" (Is the first piece of painting intended for Her Majesty?) "the faces of the women as beautiful as may be, the figures gracious and 'suelta.'" Gerbier, who wrote thus to Inigo Jones, says in another letter, that "the manner for payment" must be "settled;" "for these men" (Jordaens and Rubens) "will have that found ere they part from their work." As money did not arrive, Rubens fell conveniently lame with the gout in his hand; while Jordaens was offering to paint nine pieces for the ceiling of the royal cabinet at Greenwich, at half the price demanded by Rubens, who asked £480 sterling, "to make the pictures for the seeling." Jordaens asked £485 for the remainder of the work.

Rubens would not abate a stiver of what he demanded. This is the last idea for a work not even to be commenced, which passed through the mind of the great artist. In the ceiling of the Queen's cabinet at Greenwich his intention was "to place in the middle the 'Banquet of the Gods.' On one side, when Cupid, having undertaken to make Psyche amorous with one of the populace, became amorous himself; and on the other side, her being immortalised in the heavens." He wished, too, at last, that the other compartments of the ceiling should be painted by other artists, and, "to avoid the different styles of painting from being observed, grotesque or other inventions, without figures, might be introduced."

The painter did not live to realise the grand idea. A day or two after, Gerbier wrote, "Sir Peter Rubens is deadly sick. The physicians of this town being sent unto him for to try their best skill on him." And this was soon followed by the announcement that he was

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dead, "of a deflaction which fell in his heart, after some days' indisposition of ague and gout." One result was that "Jordaens remains prime painter here," and Gerbier adds the expression of his fear that the now prime painter will take advantage of his position by raising his prices.

The picture of the Escurial by Verhulst, but retouched by Jordaens, after the original drawings by Rubens, was, after all, bought by the King, and it safely reached him; but how the King, now close upon ruin, ever paid for it is a mystery. Gerbier, after some years of agency abroad, was penniless. He wrote to Murray to "say a favourable word in my particular help, to pay the payment of my arrears, which would be more comfort to me than the shadows of things." Yet he expected that Charles would be able to purchase some portion at least of the art collection which Rubens left at his death! To say nothing of antiques, gems, statues, &c., this noble artist possessed three hundred and odd pictures. Among these were ninety-four of his own, as yet unsold, and of this number was the 'Chapeau de Paille,' now in the national collection. There were also eleven copies (of Titian chiefly) which Rubens had made in Spain, and twenty-five, mostly from Titian, which he had executed in Italy. To these were to be added thirty-seven works of Italian masters, fifty-three of the old masters, and eighty-four of modern masters. No prince had a nobler collection, no artist was surrounded by so many glorious evidences of his own labour.

These treasures were disposed of by separate private contract. The Emperor of Germany, the Kings of Spain and Poland, the Elector of Bavaria, and (to the extent of all the other purchasers combined) the Cardinal Richelieu, became possessors of those treasures. It is strange that when Gerbier was unable to get the wages of his own agency, he could dream of his master having money enough to enable him to compete with such wealthy amateurs as those above named. In that year, 1640, Rubens died, in the midst of his arrangements for painting the canvas for the ceiling of Henrietta Maria's cabinet at Greenwich. In the same year, Vandyck left England for Paris. He returned only to find his vocation gone, and to die soon after in "deserted" London. Of his glorious work-time there, some brief notice remains to be made.

In the early part of the year 1621, while a correspondence was being carried on with Rubens touching the ceiling decoration for Whitehall, a young painter, two-and-twenty years of age, appeared at the court of James the First. There is record of his having received, in the latter end of February, a sum of one hundred pounds for "special service" rendered to his Majesty. The artist is called "the King's servant." A couple of days after the above donation, a pass was granted to him to travel during eight months. His name was

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Anthony Vandyck, and Toby Matthew wrote of him, to Carleton, that he was "a faomus *alieno*," who would paint better pieces than Rubens, for half the money!

If this be, as is believed, *our* Anthony, eleven years elapsed before he again appeared in England. Vandyck had many a commission to execute for English patrons before he came over in 1632, to find here a home for nine years; fortune, to lead a somewhat fast and vainglorious way of life, and to go down to the grave while he was yet in his prime. When Rubens arrived at Greenwich in 1629, his friend and pupil, Vandyck, was at Antwerp, painting a gorgeous 'Rinaldo and Armida,' for Charles the First, who paid for it a poor seventy-two pounds. In 1631, when Rubens was in his own palace home again, painting, or watching Jordaens and his accomplished scholars working at the pictures that were to adorn the ceiling of the banqueting-room, Anthony was occupied in painting the most touching of Madonnas and the purest of Catherines in one picture, for the Lord Treasurer, Weston, who presented it as a New Year's gift to the King.

In the following year, Vandyck gratified Charles by painting a portrait of "His Majesty's Master of Music," an artist, too, in his way, Nicholas Laniere. It is said that the painter worked at this portrait, incessantly, for a week from dawn to twilight. When it was exhibited to Charles, early in 1632, the monarch expressed a wish that England might possess the artist as well as this proof of his high art. In the month of April, Vandyck was in London "for good." He found a temporary home with his friend Geldorp in Blackfriars. All the precinct was astir at the coming to the peculiar home of artists in London of one of the foremost men of all his time. Shortly, Whitehall was astir also; king and painter stood in presence of each other. Vandyck was a cavalier in bearing, with tact and taste. To such a man Charles was of course gracious. The monarch lodged the artist at the expense of the Crown (otherwise at the cost of the people). Inigo Jones was commissioned to fashion a dwelling for him in Blackfriars, and a country house at Eltham. Ere a few months had passed, the artist thus housed by a sovereign was named "Painter in Ordinary to His Majesty." That knighthood was added to this employment, yet not wanted to dignify it, was a natural consequence. Charles not only touched Vandyck gaily on the shoulder, but threw over it a gold chain from which hung the King's portrait surrounded by diamonds.

Vandyck had earned the honour by glorious work. Within a few months of his arrival, he had painted a large family picture, representing the King, Queen, Prince of Wales, and Princess Mary, for one hundred pounds. He had, moreover, executed the portraits of the King, the French King's brother, the Archduchess Isabella, the Prince and Princess of Orange, at twenty pounds each. For the same reward he painted a 'Vitellius,' and for a fourth of the sum he "mended" a

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Galba. A warrant was issued for the payment of the total. This payment, the knighthood, the chain, and the "diamond portrait," were graceful acknowledgments of merit. Vandyck, seeing that the King was resolved to treat him as a gentleman, was equally resolved to act up to the standard, and live like a prince.

But he worked like a *man* to enable him to keep this state. On Mayday, 1633, died Lady Venetia, the wife of Sir Kenelm Digby. Since Vandyck's arrival, it is indeed said, within the few months of this year, he had, in addition to his other work, painted three portraits of this celebrated lady. One of these was a large allegorical piece, in which Lady Venetia represented Prudence, with all the Vices, including an undressed Cupid, in subjection beneath her feet. On that Mayday, 1633, Vandyck was at the side of the couch on which the fair form lay, making a sketch for his fourth portrait. It proved superior to all allegory. Beauty and dignity lay there in the sleep of death. Nothing could heighten the sentiment or solemnity. Vandyck did not attempt it. He painted the calm, young majesty of death; full of grandeur, but touchingly akin to all human nature. The artist only placed a faded rose as about to drop from the dead fingers. No sad story could have been painted with more refined significance. Vandyck might fairly be proud of his work. The work is more worthy of admiration than the man. It is unpleasant to think of the artist leaving the corpse of this poor lady, or the refined interpretation which he gave of it, to sup with his mistresses, or to paint the most impudent of them—Margaret Leman.

But Vandyck and fashion ruled the hour. His studio in Blackfriars was graced with as noble company as Whitehall; indeed, with the same company. The King himself was often there, and with him the artist's other illustrious, and perhaps more liberal, patrons, Strafford, Northumberland (no longer in the Tower), Pembroke, Somerset, and a dozen other of the splendid nobility of the time. Fancy may reproduce that studio, with its aristocratic inmates, silent in presence of Charles, but loud enough in his absence, or with his licence to speak, being present. Some paid homage of ultra-gallantry to Margaret Leman. Others gave words of condescending praise, now and then, to Vandyck's accomplished assistants, who, at various times, were to be found schooling themselves in his studio and learning how to add value to their works by giving to them the name of their master.

Vandyck was as much at his ease in the palaces and noble homes of England as princes and nobles were in the painter's studio. He was never more free from restraint in any than when he was at Petworth. That Sussex house was, in the main, the work of Carr, Earl of Somerset, who, with his beautiful and vicious Countess, ranked among the murderers of Overbury. Those noble assassins had a daughter, the Lady Anne Carr, who lived at Petworth till she contracted the

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marriage which made of her the mother of the ill-fated Lord William Russell. Anne Carr was as pure in mind as she was peerless in person. Her mother had died in the year of Vandyck's arrival in England, 1632. When the artist braved the proverbially impassable Sussex roads and sojourned in the house, the walls of which he was destined to glorify, the portrait of the beautiful mother of Anne hung there to make men wonder how wickedness could lie beneath so much apparent loveliness. As Anne sat to the artist he may have studied the passionless face of the father who sat near. The painter nobly interpreted the lady. She wore her mind in her face, and there the artist placed it. That face is radiant with beauty, innocence, intellect, and happiness. The White and Gold Room at Petworth is now filled with some of the grandest examples of portraits which ever lived and breathed on canvas. That of Lady Anne is called the 'Blue Lady,' and every beholder loves it with the love that Leslie professed for it: "She looks perfectly happy, and Vandyck must have been perfectly happy when he painted her; for she makes you perfectly happy when you look at her."* Venetia Digby, in death; and Anne Carr, in life, are masterworks. They must have been subjects of pride and despair to Vandyck's assistants. There could have been nothing finer than these works in Somerset's former collection, which, after his conviction, was confiscated, and presented by James to the Earl of Arundel.

Among Vandyck's young assistants were two from beyond sea, and two who were English. Beck, of Arnheim (b. 1621), and De Reen, Rheyn, or Rheni, of Dunkirk (b. 1610). The two young English fellows were Gandy, of Exeter (b. 1619), and one of the worthiest of the many worthy born Londoners, Dobson (b. 1610). Beck and Gandy, in respect of their somewhat younger years, were probably comrades. The Dunkirker and the illustrious Cockney, earlier born in the same year, were, doubtless, companions. In this studio, the two young Englishmen held their own against the competition of their fellows. Charles, however, thought highly of Beck, and was inclined to make him drawing-master to his son. The King one day watched him at his work in Vandyck's studio. Beck happened to be in his rapidest vein. Charles turned away smiling, as he remarked, "I believe Beck could paint riding post at full gallop!" The Arnheimer, unfortunately, was as unstable as water. Beck passed away to Sweden and hard drinking, and to very nearly being buried as dead, when he was only dead-drunk. He had a graceful facility in working, when he was inclined to work, and Queen Christine honoured him as Charles honoured the master whom Beck now reverenced and copied. Like his fellow-worker, Gandy revered and imitated too, but with greater power, feeling, and delicacy, Devonshire still contains some samples

* Mr. G. Storey, in Thornbury's "Life of Turner."

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of his merits in these respects. They were the first works of real Art on which the eye of young Reynolds fell before he went up to London, and gazed on the grace, dignity, and magical effect of the Vandyck from whom Gandy had learnt nearly all he knew. In later years, the Duke of Ormond carried Gandy to Ireland, where the English artist lived and died in honour won by industry and ability. Ormond's gallery was famous for its Vandycks, and Ormond's Vandycks are shrewdly believed to be Vandycks by the Devonshire painter, Gandy.

De Rheni was not merely Vandyck's disciple, he was that artist's slave and worshipper. He had worked among the nobles who had resorted to Vandyck's studio in Antwerp; and when the great painter came over to London, De Rheni followed him, set up his easel in Blackfriars, and listened, as he worked, to English nobles, as he had done to those of Flanders. There was not a grace which distinguished Vandyck, nor an effect which gained for him an universal applause, which De Rheni could not snatch or reach. He was not so rapid in his work as Beck, but De Rheni followed the master whom he honoured, in all things; and to such purpose, reproducing the delicacy of touch, softness of tone, grace and grandeur of manner so completely, that very few pictures of De Rheni's are known. They are all "Vandycks." This is said to be to the greater glory of De Rheni; but surely this is not so. He was so completely of the school of Vandyck as to have no individuality of his own; no mark, no grace of originality, nothing to distinguish him as having profited as great minds and cunning hands know how to profit, when they learn from masters how to be masters too.

But, next to Vandyck himself, the most interesting figure in the studio is that of the young fellow named Dobson. He is a "gentleman," of whom the extravagances of his father had happily made an artist. De Cleyn, rich with the £250 a year which the King had just assigned to him (in 1636) for furnishing designs for the tapestry manufactory at Mortlake, had given some instruction to Dobson, but harder fortune had condemned him to assist in the shop of Peake, the cavalier print-seller near Holborn Bridge. The artist-faculty, however, was irrepressible in him, and Dobson painted for pleasure and bread, and got a dealer on Snow Hill to expose his handiwork to the chances of finding a purchaser. It found something better, a patron with a heart as well as a head. Vandyck saw one of Dobson's pictures thus exposed, recognised in it the assurance of a "man" in his vocation, and forthwith, finding his way to the garret in which the young Londoner worked, transferred him thence to the splendid studio in Blackfriars; to companionship with men whose abilities would stimulate him to the utmost exertion, and to such proximity with royalty and nobility as to enable the aspiring student to hear their words of valued praise, forerunner of the curious eulogium conferred by Charles

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when he had Dobson with him at Oxford, and called him the "English Tintoretto." A striking scene took place in Vandyck's studio on one of those brilliant mornings when Charles and a glittering group of noblemen lounged about the room, and dreamed not of what four or five years were to produce. The King noticed the new face there, and probably was interested in the work on which Dobson was engaged. Vandyck, with chivalrous generosity, presented his fellow artist to the King. When young Dobson bowed low to acknowledge the monarch's gracious condescension he saluted Fortune, and he was worthy of all the reputation which he so gloriously earned. Charles was right in calling him the English Tintoretto; for though Dobson was of the school of Vandyck, his distinction is that he was not a mere producer of portraits in Vandyck's manner. He had genius, and therefore had originality. His own name is in his own work, not in letters, but in every line of his own pencil. If his portraits have not always the poetic grace of some of Vandyck's pictures, they are probably all the more true to prosaic nature. They are often more vigorous, for Vandyck was sometimes feeble from carelessness. They have a look of individual character, which impels the spectator to believe at once in the fidelity of the portraiture. One or two English names appear on the roll of artists before that of Dobson; but weighing their several merits, there is no difficulty in assigning to Dobson his undoubted right to the honour of being recorded as the founder of that grand English school of portrait painters which culminated in Reynolds and Gainsborough, who, in their successors, however able and original, have not yet found their equals.

The pension of £200 a year, settled in 1633 on Vandyck, was for the most part, a merely honorary advantage. In 1638 he had not touched a farthing of it. His lavish way of life, which would have made it acceptable, excited an expression of surprise from the King, especially when Vandyck pressed for the payment of his pension, half excusing himself by the remark that he who kept open house for his friends, and open purse for his mistresses, must necessarily be often in want of money. The London gossip of the day asserted that Vandyck sought to obviate that want by searching after the philosopher's stone—which Rubens found in his own studio.

Vandyck, too, may be said to have discovered the great mystery of alchemy, by the noble exercise of his noble art. He lived and laboured among and for the very noblest in the land. No one sat to him so often as Strafford. With no families was the artist more intimate than with the Herberts and Percys. At Wilton may still be seen some of the grandest specimens of Vandyck's quality; albeit, the great family picture of the Pembrokes may, without heresy, be accounted a *little* stiff. For various families, he sent forth from his

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studio in Blackfriars, not portraits only, but sacred and classical subjects, remarkable for the reverential or the heroic spirit with which they are executed. Occasionally, perhaps, there was a quaintness of treatment in his religious subjects as, for instance, in the 'Crucifixion' which he painted for the Earl of Northumberland. In this, the meaning of the Great Sacrifice is but indifferently interpreted by the five angels who are collecting in five cups the precious blood which flows from the five wounds. The mankind for whom it was shed are equally poorly represented by the beautiful girls and handsome lads of the family who figure there somewhat irreverently as wanton nymphs and gaillard Cupids! This mingling of sacred and profane was not uncommon with Vandyck. The David who harps before his Saul was old Laniere, the musician and painter; a man who was not too proud to be distinguished by some of David's shortcomings.

Toby Matthew was not quite correct when he said that Vandyck was equal to Rubens and not half so costly. Vandyck, indeed, asserted his equality when he proposed to glorify the sides of Whitehall with a series of paintings which should illustrate the History of the Order of the Garter. But when he named £75,000 as his honorarium (Rubens having received only £8000 for the ceiling), the subject was dropped. Vandyck probably overreached himself, and named the above large sum because he was sure that whatever estimate he made, the King would reduce it from 25 to 50 per cent., and was not sure to pay the sum agreed on, even then. Thereafter, Vandyck kept within his studio, painting the portraits of the foremost in the land, and further gratifying both himself and them, by inviting them to dinner, in order that he might arouse and study their expression.

There is something pitiable in the mean spirit of the King, haggling with the painter whom, nevertheless, he delighted to honour. In an account of Vandyck's latest work executed for his Majesty, with the price the artist set on each, duly appended, occurs "*le Prince Charles avecq le Duc de Jarc*," Vandyck estimated the value at two hundred pounds, the royal patron of Art appreciated the value at half that sum. Worse, or more unlucky, is it for the King's character, at least as an accountant, when he adds up the various items in the schedule, and making two and two to be equal to three, arrives at a total involving a mistake of seventy-five pounds in the King's favour. Vandyck himself, however, was not without a chaffering spirit. It once showed itself where it might be least looked for. Lord Conway reminds Strafford of a curious trait in this artist's character: "You were so often with Sir Anthony Vandyck," he says, "that you could not but know his gallantry for the love of Lady Stanhope, but he is come off with a *coglioneria*, for he disputed with her about the price of her picture, and sent her word that if she would not give

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the price he demanded, he would sell it to another that would give more."*

An ambitious spirit turned Vandyck's thoughts, for awhile, towards France. Remembering the unfinished galleries of the Louvre, he felt the noble ambition of being appointed to decorate them. In 1640, he left his splendid home in the Blackfriars, and went over to Paris, but his suit failed, and he returned to his studio in London, in the hope of continuing the career of glory which he had there inaugurated. But shade was fast superseding the sunshine. Where all had been a joyous paradise there was now but confusion, with prospect of *that* being more confounded. At the sight of the coming catastrophe, and with a full consciousness of its significance, the great painter's heart seems to have failed him. He fell suddenly and dangerously sick. The King, in the midst of all his own troubles, felt they were added to by the peril which threatened Vandyck. "I would give three hundred guineas," he said, "to the doctor who could save his life!" Money could not buy it. On the 9th of December, 1641, the noble artist, the profuse, but kindly-hearted man, lay dead in his chamber at Blackfriars. The burthen of his glory was greater than that of his years; he was but forty-two! A few days later, they carried him up Ludgate Hill, to Old St. Paul's; and they laid Anthony Vandyck by the side of the princely John of Gaunt.

In the elegiac verses of Cowley, the artist is floated to heaven, where he beholds such inconceivable beauty as to make him almost wish for his pencil there. Among all the celestial powers and brightnesses, "reverend Luke salutes him, first of all." The poet assures us, however, that no brightnesses could make Vandyck forget his beautiful young wife. They could only render his loving remembrances of her more intense. Maria Ruthven, we know, had won Anthony Vandyck from Margaret Leman and other saucy beauties of lively husseydom. When Cowley says to the widow of the painter, "You, and a *new-born you*, he left behind," he refers to the baby-girl whom Vandyck consigned to the additional love and guardianship of the poet's sister, Kate Cowley.

That baby-girl had been christened on the morning of her father's death. That widow had once been a joyous maid of honour in the court of Henrietta Maria, though her father, Patrick Ruthven, was in ward in the Tower, under suspicion of having had something to do with the Gowrie conspiracy. Ruthven was the fifth son of the first Earl of Gowrie, and Maria Ruthven was thus nobly born. Little further is known of her; King Charles may be said to have given his wife's favourite maid to his own favourite painter. Vandyck bequeathed to his widow and the little Justiniana all the property he

* Strafford's Letters, ii. 48.

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possessed in England. Subsequently, the daughter complained that her father's estate had perished during the wars between the King and Parliament. If this be strictly correct, the artist's illegitimate daughter, Maria Theresa Vandyck, of Antwerp, to whom he left four thousand pounds, fared better than her half-sister Justiniana. But Justiniana Vandyck was not ill-provided. She became the wife of Sir John Stepney, of Prendergast, Pembrokeshire. The last male descendant of that marriage, Sir Thomas Stepney, died childless, in 1825. Justiniana wedded with a second husband, Martin de Carbonell, Esq., and if the blood of the great painter is to be traced at all, in England, it can only be through the descendants of the last named couple.

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Lilith.

By

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

Chapter I.

Cecil, thirteenth Earl Falcon, was a man of somewhat peculiar character. Those who knew him little set him down as reserved and cold: those who knew him well said that he possessed a great power of feeling and a large store of sympathy and emotion. If the storms of passion did in truth ever attack him, their force was spent in unseen caverns of his mind: no visible wave rolled on the surface of his nature, no convulsion troubled its calmness; but that was no proof that convulsions did not exist in the depths below. Some of his friends attributed this seldom varied evenness of demeanour to the strength of his will; others said that his devotion to music exhausted all his power of feeling. Certainly he had a fine talent and a surprising love for this art, and was never so happy as when he could be left for hours together to follow out the play of his fancy and give momentary life to his reveries in the notes struck by his skilful fingers. For society he cared little, although he must always have been distinguished in it, as well for his personal qualities as for his inherited name and wealth. People who met him for the first time seldom took any strong liking to him, but there was a dignity and grace in his manner which commanded their attention. He on his side was inwardly vexed whenever he was obliged to go into society; and he was no better pleased than usual when one night he felt it necessary to appear at a ball given by his old friend Mrs. Norman. Here, just as he was beginning to congratulate himself on the prospect of soon slipping away, his attention was caught by a girl dancing on the opposite side of the room. The musicians were playing a languid, dreamy German waltz, and the singular grace with which her movements seemed to respond to the spirit of the music first attracted his eye. Then, as she and her partner swung round the room towards him, he observed her more closely, and noticed a kind of childish appealing look in her face, a look as of one who sought some strong support to lean on, being too weak to face the turmoil of the world alone. There was also a fascination spread all over her small pliant figure which was undefined, and therefore to a man of Lord Falcon's fastidious temperament the more attractive, perhaps, because it presented no salient point for the critical faculty to lay hold of and find

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fault with. In the claims made by established beauties to admiration Lord Falcon generally found some defect; either the face was somewhere out of drawing, or, if faultless in that respect, was spoilt by a want of meaning. The attraction of this girl, if indefinable, was far from being insignificant: as she passed the spot where Falcon stood her eyes sent forth a glance in his direction, and their look filled him with a feeling of perplexed admiration: they seemed to remind him of something beautiful, of what he could not tell; they had also a hidden fire, he thought, an untamed expression which was at variance with his first impression. He looked, wondered, and looked again; and at the end of the next dance he went up to his cousin Arthur Vane.

"Who is that girl with whom you were dancing just before this, Arthur?" he asked.

"What?" said the other; "is Saul among the prophets? Are you asking a woman's name? Can it be that your devotion has wandered from Beethoven and Mozart to the things of this earth?"

Falcon smiled with a certain gravity of demeanour which belonged even to his smiles. "Cannot one ask a name without being suspected of a particular interest in its owner?" he said.

"*One* can, no doubt; but scarcely you, Falcon, who have never done such a thing before. But I am glad you are curious about her, for I think you would like her."

"Do you? Why?"

"I can scarcely tell you why. But you have a way of taking to anything that is peculiar, and I think she is that. There is something curious and unlike ordinary life in her look and manner. I do not know what to call it—barbaric, perhaps."

"Barbaric?" repeated Falcon, musingly. "No; I do not think it is quite that."

"You seem to have observed her closely," said Vane with a laugh; "but I will introduce you to her, that will make it easier for you to discover what she is."

"I shall be very happy," said Falcon; "but you have not yet told me her name."

"There is one good reason for that, which is, that I don't know it myself. You know how difficult it is to catch names; but I can easily find it out. Come, we will go and look for her."

They began to make their way through the rooms with this object, but during their passage Falcon came face to face with Miss Norman, the daughter of the house. Greeting developed into conversation, which presently turned on to Falcon's pet subject, music; and finding an empty seat next to Miss Norman, he occupied it, leaving Vane to continue his search alone.

Miss Norman was a fine musician, and Falcon was always glad to meet her, if only for that reason; but, apart from that, he had a liking

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for her, which her mother sometimes hoped might develop into a stronger feeling. Of this, however, there was no chance: Vane was quite right when he implied that his cousin had never cared much for any woman. The fact was that he had little sympathy with the everyday life of the world; he preferred his own existence of dreamy imaginations which it was his chief delight to interpret in music. But in Miss Norman's society he generally found some pleasure: she was unaffected and clever, did not vex him with trivialities, and could criticise his compositions with interest and taste. Thus it happened that, relinquishing for a time the purpose with which he had begun to walk through the rooms, he remained talking to Miss Norman, and ended by dancing with her, more for the purpose of carrying on their conversation than anything else.

Vane, meanwhile, had found the object of his search, and was dancing with her again. His curiosity was aroused concerning her, partly on his own account, partly because of the interest which Falcon seemed to take in her; and he looked at her carefully more than once to discover wherein lay her attraction. Her features had no striking beauty or peculiarity: they were rather small and irregular; her dress and demeanour, when analysed, could not be said to differ specially from those of others; yet there was something unusual and striking about her. Perhaps it might be in her eyes that the charm, if charm it was, should be found; they had a strange, far-away look, he thought. Even as he thought so she looked up and met his glance with a gaze so keen and piercing that his own dropped before it, and he felt confused, as if detected in a guilty action. He recovered himself quickly, and said to her: "When I came to look for you just now I was impelled by purely unselfish motives, and you see virtue has brought its reward for once."

"Has it?" she said, "and what was your unselfish motive?"

"My cousin, Lord Falcon, was anxious to be introduced to you."

"Lord Falcon? I think I have heard of him. Is not he very musical? Is he here now?"

"Yes," said Vane, "there he is, just opposite to us."

She looked across the room to where Falcon was standing, deep in conversation with Miss Norman. He was bending down towards her, and his face, usually marked by a grave stillness, was lighted up with an eager interest. Any one looking at them might have thought that they were deep in a flirtation, or in something yet more serious; whereas, in fact, they were discussing a great master's rendering of a certain violin solo. Falcon's grand manner gave a picturesque aspect to a group ordinary in itself; and it may have been the sense of this which caused Vane's partner to look steadily at the pair. Vane, observing this, said, in a somewhat mischievous tone, "They seem to get on very well together." She, without varying the direction of her

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eyes, replied quickly, "Yes, is not she Miss Norman, the daughter of the house? I know her very slightly."

"She is," replied Vane; "they are old friends, and may be more some day, people say. But I believe people are wrong, as they usually are."

"Do you?" she asked, with a rapid look of inquiry, and before he could answer, said with a little soft laugh, "Shall we go on again?"

The next pause in the dance brought them close to Miss Norman and Falcon; and he looking up for a moment from his conversation encountered once again the eyes which had so strangely impressed him. Again he wondered at the curious mixture of expressions which he thought he detected in them, but failed to define. As he wondered and his thoughts strayed into a vague reverie, Vane and his partner swept past him, and he was recalled to himself by hearing close to him a slight laugh, low in tone, but of a penetrating quality, and seeing the graceful turn of a head disappearing in the crowd. This was the last dance of the evening, and Falcon having seen his partner safely into her mother's custody, went in search of the girl who had been dancing with his cousin, but found that she had disappeared. In the hall he fell in with his brother-in-law, Sir Harry Grey, and they walked away together.

"Can you tell me," said Falcon, presently, "who was the girl with whom Arthur was dancing?"

"A little girl in white, with rather an odd look?" asked the other.

Falcon nodded.

"Oh, yes! I thought Arthur seemed rather hit by her."

Falcon paused a moment, and then replied with an asperity unusual to him, "Arthur is never hit by anybody; he flirts a little with every one, and never goes much deeper. He danced with her twice, it is true; but he has probably forgotten all about her by this time. He does not even know her name, I believe. What is her name, and who is she? There is something rather interesting about her, I think."

"Yes," said Sir Harry, who in the ruminant content of his cigar, had not noticed Falcon's unusual excitement. "She is an odd girl, I fancy! Miss Langenheim her name is."

"A German name," said Falcon.

"Yes! but the family have been in England for some time, and are practically English now. Her father is a painter; you must have seen his pictures."

"I have," said Falcon, "he paints very imaginative pictures, if I remember right."

"Imaginative, just so," said Sir Harry; "that's what people call it; they seem to me poor stuff, but I daresay I'm wrong. I must say when I go to look at pictures I like to see something that I've

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really seen or might see some day; and who ever expects to see such things as Langenheim paints? Goblins and ghosts, and a lot of stuff of that sort; very well painted I've no doubt, but it doesn't interest me. He's a good fellow, though, Langenheim, as far as I've seen him."

"And his daughter?" asked Falcon.

"I can't make her out. Sometimes when I talk to her I think she's a perfect baby; and sometimes I think she's laughing at me all the time. But she's a nice girl, too; she has pretty ways with her, kitten-like kind of ways."

"Ah," said Falcon, "kitten-like, that is just it."

"She is like a kitten," continued Sir Harry; "they say she leads her father rather a life at times, but he is devoted to his Lilith. Odd name Lilith, isn't it?"

"Very odd," said Falcon; "it is in the legend the name of Adam's first wife. The word really means 'before the morning dawn.'"

"Just so," said Sir Harry. "They say her father was painting one of his queer pictures when she was born, and would call her Lilith after somebody or something in the picture. The mother didn't like it; said it was a name fit only for a heathen, and was sure to bring the child ill-luck and ruin; but Lilith she was called all the same."

"And Lilith she is called still. A strange name, certainly—and a strange girl probably," said Falcon.

"Yes, a strange girl. I daresay you would get on with her. If you like I can take you any day to Langenheim's studio."

"Thank you," said Falcon, "I daresay I will come. Here we are at my door. Good night."

Falcon went up to his rooms, opened his piano, and sitting down, let his fingers wander over the keys at the bidding of the vague thoughts which hovered in his brain. He played Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata,' and the soft ripple of the melody reminded him of Lilith Langenheim's graceful movement in the dance; he struck into a wild mazurka of Chopin, and recalled the strange look which she had darted at him; he changed to Mendelssohn's 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and still her image rose before him. As the airy delicate notes sounded he seemed to see troops of fairies,—Peasblossom, Mustard-seed, Cobweb, and their attendant rout,—flitting hither and thither in the chequered moonlight, and in their midst stood Titania in the likeness of Lilith. Perhaps it was, in truth, the thought of her latent in his mind which led him to play everything wild and fantastic which he could remember rather than that the eerie melodies recalled her to him; but in the mood which then possessed him he was little inclined to make nice distinctions between cause and effect, and the most marked impression on his mind when he left the piano and went

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to bed was that this girl had produced a singular effect upon his imagination.

Lilith meanwhile had gone home with her father to his house in Kensington. Mr. Langenheim was a man of a dignified presence, tall and upright, with keen dark eyes, which looked out from under heavy brows, whose blackness contrasted with his white hair and beard. It was this contrast as much as anything else which gave a wildness to his appearance, and favoured the report that he was afflicted with a most violent temper, which his daughter's presence alone had power to subdue. For her he was all kindness: he humoured her every fancy; when they were seen together it was very easy to understand how the father, from whose hand one would naturally expect pictures of a dashing or ferocious character, came to paint those bright, poetical works of fancy by which he was chiefly known. It was possible in the hints of subtle mockery, which he sometimes introduced into his pictures, to discover a trace of the bitter temper with which he was credited, but the general effect of his paintings was light and ethereal. When the father and daughter arrived at home that night—

"Well, fairy," said Mr. Langenheim, "did you have a nice ball? With whom did you dance? Any new partners?"

"Yes," said Lilith, "there was a Mr. Vane, who was rather nice, I thought. And there ought to have been another: his cousin Lord Falcon; but he was stopped on the way when he was coming to be introduced to me. Do you know Lord Falcon, dear papa?"

"No; I know about him; a man of considerable power, I hear, especially in the line of music: he has composed several songs of a rather sombre nature, which I believe corresponds with his own. At least he is said to be very reserved."

"I wonder why people are ever reserved," said Lilith, reflectively; "it seems to me that it would be much better if everyone were to tell out what was in them."

"If everyone were like you, fairy, that plan might possibly answer. But while there is so much that had better not be told in people's minds, it might lead to confusion and evil consequences."

"Is there much that ought not to be told?" asked Lilith, with an air of simplicity. "I suppose there is, but it seems a great pity. Why should it be so?"

"Don't trouble your little head about such things, my pet. Good night."

Chapter II.

Next day Vane came to Falcon's rooms, and found him studying and correcting a MS. score of a composition.

"Still devoted to the old idol?" he cried. "I thought you seemed likely to go after strange goddesses last night."

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"What do you mean?" asked Falcon, looking up for a moment, and then returning to his score.

"I fancied you might have found a counter attraction in Miss Langenheim."

"Oh! you have found out her name?" said Falcon.

"So have you, it seems," replied Vane laughing, "or else some occult sympathy led you to guess whom I meant. Such things exist, I believe; you do not think so, of course; you are too strong-minded, and attribute all such ideas to a weak intellect or a feeble constitution. Whether she is a goddess or not, as I dare say she may be, I think there is something strange about her. What do you think?"

"I?" said Falcon; "why should I trouble myself to think on such a subject?"

"I do not know why you should do so," replied Vane, "but I am tolerably certain that you have thought about her. You displayed an interest in her last night which I have seldom observed in you before: I saw you looking at her with, to say the least of it, attention, more than once."

Falcon rose and put away his music sheet. Every form of deceit, however slight, was distasteful to him, and he now spoke out exactly that which was in him.

"Well," he said, "I did watch her with attention; she did interest me; this I confess; is my confession very terrible?"

"Coming from you it is perhaps a little alarming," said Vane laughingly, and then catching, with quick sympathy, a touch of dislike to this jesting tone in Falcon's face, he went on: "If you really are at all interested about her I am glad; it seems to me that you care too little for anything in the outer world, and the Langenheims are thoroughly artistic people, and would please you, I think: the father asked me last night to come and look at his pictures any day I liked, and I do not suppose there would be any difficulty in your procuring an introduction."

"Thank you," said Falcon, with some deliberation. "Sir Harry, with whom I walked home last night, has already offered to take me to Mr. Langenheim's studio."

"Oh!" replied Vane, in a tone which implied that if he had said more it would have been, "Has it gone so far as that?"

He walked about the room a little in a restless way, and then said: "Have you anything to do this afternoon, Cecil?"

"That means," said Falcon, with his grave smile, "will you come to the Langenheims with me? I have no objection to gratifying you so far."

"Ah! you are always laughing at me for what you call my impressionable temperament; but for once you are mistaken. In the

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case of Miss Langenheim, I am influenced by the merest curiosity—as no doubt you are yourself."

To this shaft Falcon made no reply, and appeared to be busy in arranging his music for a few moments, at the end of which he said:

"We may as well go now as at any other time."

"Yes," said Vane, "it is a good light for looking at pictures, is it not? Let us go and call for Sir Harry."

Upon this the two set out.

Vane certainly deserved the character for being impressionable, of which in his excuses to Falcon he had accused himself; but it was equally true that Lilith Langenheim had not produced upon his susceptible nature that effect which women of various kinds of fascination were apt to produce. He felt no inclination to flirt with her; no nascent tenderness: he experienced only, as he had said, a curiosity about her. He wondered himself at this, knowing to some extent his own weakness for falling a little in love with every new face which possessed any attraction; and he wondered the more because he saw a man so difficult to please as Falcon betraying a certain amount of excitement about a girl in whom his fastidious judgment might easily find defects. Thus his curiosity was awakened, as well to discover why Falcon took so great an interest in her, as to inquire on his own account into her character and belongings. Falcon, on his part, could not define the feelings which led him to agree so quickly to Vane's plan of going to Mr. Langenheim's studio; he was conscious that his usual equanimity was a little ruffled, but could not probably, had he been so inclined, have traced and analysed the disturbing influences which were at work. The reflections of both men, however, were sufficiently absorbing to keep them nearly silent until they arrived at Sir Harry Grey's house, where they were received by Lady Emmeline Grey, commonly known as Lady Emmy, Falcon's sister. For her her brother entertained a deep affection; for her and in her service he would undertake anything, even when it involved leaving his piano and his music in the very heat of successful composition; and an expression of singular softness and sweetness came into his face as he greeted her, and said:

"How do you do, dear Emmy? We missed you much at the ball last night."

As she began to answer, Sir Harry came into the room.

"How are you, Falcon? How do, Arthur?" he said. "I suppose you two mean to go to Langenheim's studio? Well, I'm always glad to go there, not that I care about his pictures, but he's a deuced pleasant fellow, Langenheim, and that little girl of his amuses me. You'll be fighting over her I expect, you two."

He chuckled contentedly as he concluded his speech; but Falcon

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looked grave as usual, Vane made a quick gesture of dissent, and Lady Emmy said:

"You should not put such ideas into young men's heads, Harry. Falcon, of course, is going to look at Mr. Langenheim's studies, and as for Arthur, I doubt if he can care for anyone up to the point of quarrelling."

"Well," said Sir Harry," I was right in my guess as to your intentions, at any rate; so let us be going."

They started accordingly, for Kensington. Before they went, Lady Emmy looked hard at her brother, and said, "Take care of yourself, Falcon," to which he only replied,

"Dear little Emmy! always thinking for others."

It was a bright spring day, such as comes once in a while to enliven the spirits of those who are condemned to dwell in a region for the most part dark and smoke-weighted. Birds were singing cheerily among the early leaves, as they walked through Kensington Gardens; and the sun shone with a brilliance which is so rare in London, that it seems misplaced and garish when it first appears. Thus, while their walk was pleasant and inspiriting, the change from the prevailing brightness without to the carefully arranged light and shade within the studio which they entered, came just at the right time to produce an agreeable effect. It has often been said that rooms bear the impress of their owner's individuality, if he has any; and the aspect of Mr. Langenheim's studio argued, that whoever had planned it possessed an original taste. The floor was polished and uncarpeted, save for a large soft rug in front of the fireplace, whereon a Persian cat was stretched lazily, at full length, blinking its large eyes in sleepy contentment. In one corner was a tall Japanese screen covered with quaint devices, which Vane, on close inspection, discovered with a little disgust to be elaborate representations of the Japanese idea of hell; in another, behind a velvet-covered table, littered with all kinds of *bric-à-brac*, Dresden china, miniatures by Cosway, and Louis Quatorze snuff-boxes, stood a lay figure, the white drapery of which, somehow suggested the idea of a shroud to Vane's imagination. On an easel, was an unfinished picture, which represented 'Queen Mab and her Court.' The central figure was evidently drawn from Lilith; she sat in an attitude of fantastic grace on an airy throne, receiving the homage of her courtiers. Falcon looked long at the picture.

"That is wonderfully like your daughter, Mr. Langenheim," he said, presently, "and allow me to say, an exquisite picture."

The artist gave a quick look at him from under his heavy brows, and said, "Here is another picture which I think will interest you."

He led the way to the fireplace, over which hung a large picture, of which Falcon did not at once comprehend the meaning. It represented a mountain landscape seen by moonlight; all of which, save

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the foreground, was obscured by driving mist and clouds; in the foreground were two men leaning against a projecting rock, and looking intently into the mass of wreathing vapour. Fixing his gaze upon these two figures, about neither of whom there was at first sight anything striking or peculiar, Falcon observed that the face of the one bore an expression of deep unrest and hardly mastered sorrow, while the careless amusement visible in the bearing and countenance of the other had something painful and mocking in the force of its contrast. Following with his eye the direction of their glance, the spectator perceived that the eddying clouds which crept and rolled across the mountain in the dim light of the background, were full of grotesque shapes so near akin in colour and consistency to the drift itself as to seem part of the sphere which they inhabited. Here might be seen a long-nosed fiend, bowing low, with gestures of extravagant admiration, to an old witch; there, a couple of graceful sprites dancing swiftly together through the light vapour; farther on again, was a group of strange phantoms, which might be either living beings moving in the world of elves, or mere images, formed out of the whirling mist according to the spectator's fancy; over all the skill of the painter had cast a wonderful air of life and motion. In the very centre of the picture was a rift in the clouds, through which a ray of moonlight streamed on to a female figure draped in long gauzy robes, from whom the surrounding goblins and witches seemed to have shrunk in terror or subjection, so that she walked entirely alone. Her face could not be distinguished; but the artist had infused a spirit of disdain into her attitude, which would by itself account for her solitude. While Falcon continued to look closely at the painting, the artist said:

"That is the picture on which I was at work when my daughter was born, and I called her after it in a manner; you have recognised the subject already, no doubt."

Before Falcon could reply, Sir Harry and Vane, who had been looking together at the studies and sketches which hung round the wall, came up.

"Strange picture that, isn't it, Falcon?" said Sir Harry. "Scene on the Brocken with Faust and Mephistopheles looking on. You've read Faust, of course, and will know all about it; I haven't. I don't go in for that sort of thing."

"You have seen the opera, probably?" said Mr. Langenheim.

"Yes, yes; I've seen the opera scores of times; but there's nothing like that in it. I like the opera. I like to see that fellow, Faure, when they hold up the crosses of their swords at him."

"Yes," said Vane, "that is fine. I see, Mr. Langenheim, you have chosen the moment of Lilith's appearance for your picture. Retzsch, if I am not mistaken, has taken the apparition of Gretchen for his outline drawing."

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"Yes," replied the artist, "it may have been because I was afraid of copying Retzsch; but I think the real fact was, that the idea started into my head. A picture strikes me suddenly, and takes possession of me, until I have transferred it to canvas. Whether it is worth the trouble of transferring or not, is a question which never occurs to me at the time."

"This one was well worth it," said Falcon, who was looking still at it. At this moment the door opened and Lilith Langenheim entered the room with the peculiar light floating step which had struck Falcon as being so graceful at the ball. A smile of triumph lit up her face for a moment when she perceived his presence; but she scarcely raised her eyes to his when her father introduced him, and turned almost immediately to Vane, saying, "I hope you have been admiring papa's pictures. But of course you have, because you have good taste—at least I have heard so."

"I am glad you have heard so much good of me, Miss Langenheim. I can bear out your kind expression in this, that I have been admiring Mr. Langenheim's pictures very much."

"That is quite right," said Lilith. "I shall not ask Sir Harry for his opinion, because he always pretends to know nothing about them. I believe it is only to save himself the trouble of talking."

"Fact is," said Sir Harry to Vane, in an undertone, "I like some pictures well enough, but I never can see anything to care about in Langenheim's; so I'm always obliged to seem to know nothing about painting when I come here."

Lilith had moved opposite to the picture of 'Queen Mab' on the easel. "What do you think of this, Lord Falcon?" she asked; "does it please you?"

"Yes," replied Falcon, "it pleases me very much. It is an excellent portrait."

She looked keenly at him; but only remarked, as if she had seen no particular meaning in his speech: "Papa is not supposed to be a portrait painter. Have you no other reason for liking it? Do you care for that kind of subject?"

"It has a certain attraction for me. Everything that takes us out of everyday life is pleasant. The world is so dull and wearisome in its monotony."

"The world dull?" said Vane. "I think it is a most amusing place. Do you find it dull, Miss Langenheim?"

"Sometimes, horribly; there is no such thing as real excitement, nothing to stir all one's pulses and keep one's nerves on a continual strain. That would be something worth living for!" She made a gesture of impatience with her hands as she spoke, interlacing the fingers with a quick pressure, and her father, observing her with his keen watchful eyes, came up and said, "Can you find me that sketch

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of the Hartz mountains? I think it will please Sir Harry more than any of these fanciful things." She went to a portfolio, and drew out a sketch of a mountain view, with powerful effects of light and shade.

"How easily," said Vane, as she held up the sketch for inspection, "one can understand superstition being rife in such a place. I declare I can almost see the giant raftsman, Michael, lurking in that deep shadow beneath the trees."

"You have a quick imagination, Mr. Vane," said Lilith. "What a pity it is that papa cannot always secure such appreciative spectators for his pictures, is it not, Sir Harry?" she added with a malicious little smile.

"Just so," said Sir Harry.

Soon after this the young men took their leave. As they walked back Vane said to Falcon, "What do you think of Miss Langenheim now?"

"I have not your rapid power of forming opinions, Arthur," replied the other, "and I therefore reserve my decision. What do you think?"

"I think she is not a girl to know all at once, though I believe I exaggerated her singularity last night. One's feelings are excited by the glare and the music, the hum and the clatter, and the constant motion of a ball, and one is apt to see things in an extravagant light. Don't you agree with me, Harry?"

"Quite so," said Sir Harry; "there's such a din and bustle going on all round you that you don't know whether you're on your head or your heels. She is a queer little girl though, that Miss Langenheim, and so is her father. They get wrapped up in art and one thing or another, and forget what goes on in the world. Why, I believe if you were to ask old Langenheim who was prime minister he wouldn't know."

The three sank into silence after this. Both Falcon's and Vane's reflections were occupied with Lilith. Falcon, whose habit of mind led him to consider all his impressions seriously, began to analyse his feelings with regard to this girl, and before long arrived at the conclusion that she had taken a strong hold upon him; he had seldom before met any girl whom he had really cared to see more than once; never one whom he had desired to see a third time; and now there was no doubt that he had left Mr. Langenheim's studio with a distinct intention of returning to it again. He would not yet acknowledge to himself that his heart was touched by one of whom he had seen so little, but he could not deny that such a state of things was likely to arrive. He had complained of the dullness and weariness of external life, and here was a being who appeared to be neither dull nor wearisome, and who on her side was vexed with the monotony of

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the world. Then there certainly was something unusual in her nature, something fiery and excitable which would always rouse a man given too much to dreamy meditation into action and life. Here he perceived that his feelings were outrunning his reason and wandering into dangerous ground, and so forced them into another channel. His cousin, meantime, wondered about many things; wondered why he felt no inclination to flirt with Lilith; wondered whether Falcon did, and what Falcon would look like if he condescended to flirt. Then he fell to envying his cousin a little for his power of concentration and self-mastery, and thinking that if he himself had devoted to some one study or art the time which he had spent in cultivating many, in falling in and out of love, and in a hundred other fripperies, he might have become such an one as Falcon. He might just as well have hoped to add a cubit to his stature by taking thought, but of this fact he was ignorant. At Sir Harry's door the three parted, Vane and Falcon going away together, while Sir Harry went in.

"Well, Harry," said Lady Emmy, "how did your visit go off?"

"Well enough," he replied; "I never care myself about Langenheim's pictures, but I think Arthur and Falcon were pleased."

"Did Arthur flirt with Miss Langenheim?"

"Not much; he doesn't seem to care about her, but I rather think Falcon does. He didn't say much, but I suspect he thought the more, like the monkeys."

"I hope you are mistaken," said Lady Emmy.

"Why? It strikes me it would be a very good thing. Falcon's sure to marry some one artistic if he marries at all, and you don't want him to remain single, I suppose. It seems to me that little girl would just suit him. She's rather odd herself, and would understand his odd ways. Do you know anything against her?"

"I know that she broke poor young Gordon's heart, and she is credited with numerous feats of that kind. But that is nothing—nothing, at least, to what I feel about her. Women have a way of finding each other out which happily or unhappily is not given to men, and I do not like the look of Lilith Langenheim's eyes."

"She has very pretty eyes," said Sir Harry; "perhaps that is why you abuse them. Now you mention it, there is an odd look about them, but I see no harm in that."

"I see much harm to come if Falcon should care about her, and the worst part of it is that there are no means of stopping it. When he once makes up his mind he will do so for ever, and he will allow no one to mend or mar the process of making it up. You will think I speak with exaggeration, but I am confident that Falcon had better remain single all his life than marry that girl."

"My dear Emmy," said Sir Harry, looking perturbed, "of course I think you take an exaggerated view. I think you often do, but

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then you're often right; and if you really think so badly of the girl, I'm sorry I took Falcon there."

"He would have found other means of going if you had not done so. As for thinking badly of her, remember that I have nothing but my own thoughts to go upon, and pray never say a word of this to Falcon. Let us hope I have formed an unjust opinion."

When Lilith and her father were left alone he said to her, "What do you think of our two new comers, little fairy?"

"Mr. Vane seems very agreeable, and Lord Falcon very—thoughtful."

"Do you know what he was thinking about?"

"No, papa," she said, climbing on to his knee and putting her arm round his neck; "but I suppose you do; you seem always to read people's minds."

"I can read yours enough to see that you know as well as I do what Lord Falcon was thinking about; but I will tell you, to make it yet more certain; he was thinking about you."

"Dear old papa! It is your fondness for me which makes you imagine everyone else must be fond of me. But do you really think it is so?" she added with charming inconsistency.

"I am certain of it; and do not think I want to scold you, my pet, if I warn you to give him no encouragement which you cannot afterwards be accountable for."

"Ah," she said with a little motion of vexation, "you are thinking of Frank Gordon! It is unkind of you to remind me of that."

"Of him and of others. Do not be angry, fairy. I do not say that it was your fault. I do not believe it was."

"My fault! Do you think I meant to hurt them? How could I tell that he cared for me like that?"

"It is because you could not tell then that I wish you to use your experience now. Lord Falcon is a man who could ill bear such a blow."

"But papa, Lord Falcon has only seen me once."

"Lord Falcon is not as other men are altogether. But I do not want to put it into your vain little head that he is devoted to you already. I wish only to caution you."

"Yes, papa," she said gravely; "but you do not really think me vain, do you?"

For all answer he kissed her, and with a half-sigh went to work at his painting again.

The Frank Gordon of whom both Lady Emmy and Mr. Langenheim had spoken was a young man who was said to be of some promise, a vague phrase which is popular perhaps by force of its vagueness and consequent safety. No one can be accused of hypocrisy or want of judgment for saying that such an one has much promise when the performance to which the promise refers is left entirely in

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doubt. Young Gordon was, perhaps, not different from many other young men, in that he possessed very fair abilities, a tolerable industry in using them, and a brave and true heart. But he was different in this—that he possessed a vast capacity of loving, which he concentrated upon one object; and that object was Lilith. He had met her in London, as young people do meet; had been fascinated by her, had sought her society continually, had imagined—whether with good reason or not—that his devotion to her was not unappreciated, had at last proposed to her, and been refused with some amazement and some expression of sorrow. There were those who said that she had never given him any real cause for hope, that he had no right to misinterpret what was merely friendship on her side and liking for his society and conversation; that he ought to have taken her fanciful nature and ways into account. There were also those who said that she had played fast and loose with him; that the manner in which she one day received him with sympathy and kindness and the next with a kind of trembling distrust, was enough to make any one form the conclusion which he had formed. Among these was Lady Emmy; but Frank Gordon was rather a protégé of hers, and had confided all his sorrows to her. He had come to her soon after his rejection, and in the bitterness of his heart had said to her, "She played with me as a cat does with a mouse;" but the next moment he had wished to recall the words, and said that there was really no fault on her side, and that he alone was to blame for his folly in construing her words and actions according to his own desires, and not by the light of clear judgment. Lady Emmy's kind heart had been full of pity for the poor boy and of admiration for his chivalry in wishing to spare Lilith from reproach, and it may be that her view of the matter was prejudiced by her womanly sympathy. Certain it is that for a time he was, as she had said, broken-hearted, and had now fled from the scene of his disappointment to try and forget it in travel. Lilith, as she posed herself in the pretty indolent attitude which her father had selected for Queen Mab, thought of him with a kind of pity which soon gave way to vexation at his having given her cause for regret. She could not understand why the credit or discredit of having filled his cup with misery should rest on her; it was not her fault if he had loved her and she had not cared to return his love. Then a feeling of gratification at possessing the power to stir men's hearts came over her, and she fell to thinking whether she did in truth possess that power over Lord Falcon's heart. For him she experienced a kind of respect which she did not remember to have known before: she felt as if in him she recognised something of her own restless, wayward nature, but felt also that in him, if it existed, it was subdued and quelled to impassiveness by a strong power of repression. Perhaps she thought such a faculty of bridling his

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own soul might be extended to hers, or perhaps her own might avail to break down its force; and at that thought she laughed with the little low laugh that was peculiar to her. Her father hearing it, paused a moment in his work to ask, "What is it, fairy?" and she answered him, "Nothing, dear papa; only some thoughts in my silly little head."

Chapter III.

A few nights after Falcon's first visit to Mr. Langenheim's studio he went to the opera with Sir Harry Grey and Lady Emmy. She had dramatic and musical tastes, which her husband shared to a certain extent, but not sufficiently to give her that delight of sympathy which she found in her brother's companionship. When the emotions are aroused by the magic of art, the pleasure of excitement is doubled by the knowledge that it is shared by one whom we love and who is close to us.

When they witnessed together any great production of art, even if they interchanged no words, Lady Emmy knew that Falcon's feelings were stirred in the same kind, if not to the same degree as her own, and by the same influences. She looked forward to such occasions with almost a child's pleasure of anticipation. As they went to the opera on this night she said to her brother, "I am so glad it is the 'Freischutz' to-night: Faure is so fine in Caspar."

"He is very fine," replied Falcon; "the grim recklessness which he preserves throughout the part is so different from the affected joviality of ordinary actors. The suppressed scorn of his victim, the despairing mirth as to himself which he infuses into the drinking song are wonderful. Of course I speak only of his acting now; about his singing there can be but one opinion."

"Yet," said Lady Emmy, "I have heard people say that they could not bear his voice."

"There's nothing wonderful in that, Emmy," said Sir Harry; "if a thing is good you'll always find somebody to abuse it. If it's bad it isn't worth the trouble of picking holes in."

"A very just remark, Harry," said Falcon." "There are so many people, too, who go to the opera without caring one atom either for music or acting; it is the correct thing to do, and they do it, just in the same spirit which carries them to church on Sunday."

"Exactly so," said Sir Harry; "they come to look at each other. They'd be quite as pleased if there was a barrel organ playing tunes on the stage."

"I wonder," said Lady Emmy, "how many people in the house to-night will be interested in the wonderful acting of the incantation scene?"

"That is, indeed, acting," said Falcon. "The terror which creeps

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over Caspar gradually in spite of himself, which is always overmastered by fresh efforts of courage and purpose, can only be rendered as it is by a great artist."

"Yes," said Sir Harry, "that's quite true. You see that he doesn't care a bit for all the hobgoblins round him, and yet he's inclined to be in a deuce of a fright all the time."

"Very well put, Harry," said Lady Emmy, with a laugh. "Here we are, I think."

During the first act her expectations of enjoying the opera in concert with her brother were fully realized; at every phrase of the music, every instance of the actors' or singers' skill which appealed to her fancy, she found a responsive look or pressure of a hand ready to assure her of Falcon's sympathy. At the conclusion she remained for a few seconds in silent admiration of the wonderful music of Caspar's song of triumph, and the wonderfully controlled fire with which it was interpreted; then she turned to communicate her impressions to Falcon, but he was gone. "Looking for Falcon, little Emmy?" said her husband. "He's found an attraction in the boxes. What do you think it is?"

"I know without looking," she replied. "Of course it is sure to be Lilith Langenheim." And looking up to the boxes she saw that in fact her brother was talking to Lilith in a box occupied by her, her father, and Arthur Vane. "My poor boy!" said Lady Emmy, regretfully, as she noted the earnestness which appeared in his face.

"Come, don't be so desponding, Emmy," said her husband. "Remember you told me the other day that you had nothing to make you really think ill of her."

"I cannot help it, dear," she said. "I should be anxious about Falcon, I believe, even if I knew he were devoting himself to an angel; and however little I know about that young woman, I am sure she does not come under that head."

Falcon had greeted the Langenheims with more warmth than he generally put into the ordinary courtesies of life. "This is an unexpected pleasure," he had said. "I did not know that you affected the opera."

"Nor do we often," said Mr. Langenheim; "but we are both very fond of this opera, and Mr. Vane kindly offered us these places this afternoon."

"I would have let you know," said Vane to Falcon, in whose face he fancied there was a shade of displeasure; "but I only got the box just in time to go round to Mr. Langenheim."

"You are fond of this music?" said Falcon to Lilith.

"I am fond of this opera. I believe I like anything that has to do with *diablerie*," she replied, with a slight, quick turn of her head and a confiding look, as if she were telling him something which

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she would not tell to any one else. "You are very musical, are you not?"

"I love music."

"What instrument do you play? All? Tell me."

"I can play several, but there are few that interest me much singly. Practically, the piano answers one's purposes better than anything else."

"The piano—yes," she said; "but there is a want of strength sometimes in the piano. If I were a musician, I think I would like nothing so much as to lead an orchestra, to sway all those minds and fingers at once with the motion of your hand, to be absolute in rule over all that collected skill and power down there—that would be splendid! Next to that, I think I would play the organ; there is such depth and grandeur in it. Do you play it, Lord Falcon?"

"Whenever I get a chance. At least, that is not quite true, for I have had one chance which I have neglected for a long time. There is an old organ at my house in the country which I have never touched; but for that there are some reasons."

"Reasons! I should think there were!" cried Vane, who had heard Falcon's last few words. "There are such stories about——"

His sentence was interrupted by his cousin laying a significant grip, unseen by the others, on his arm, and faltering for a moment, he finished it in these words: "I mean I should think the pipes are all tumbling to pieces by this time."

"You have an old house?" said Lilith to Falcon. "How interesting that must be! Are not those two ladies to whom you are bowing, Mrs. Norman and Miss Norman? Are you going down to see them?"

"No," said he in a low voice; "I prefer staying where I am."

She smiled as a person who had just done a good action might smile, and at that moment the curtain rose upon the incantation scene. Then followed that fine effect of the actor's art, of which Falcon and his sister had spoken. The player's power over himself was communicated to the spectators; their minds followed in the track of his until the wild horrors indicated on the stage acquired a real importance, and Vane's vivid sensibilities were so excited that, although he knew the scene by heart, it became a question of actual moment to him whether Caspar's courage would give way under the accumulation of terrors which attacked it. He gave a sigh of mingled admiration and relief when, at last, standing with outstretched arms, surrounded with a grim glory of hellish fires, the hunter, as he cast the seventh bullet, pronounced in desperate triumph the fatal "Sette." Lilith had manifested even more interest and excitement: her eyes glittered, her colour came and went, and as the curtain fell she clutched her father's arm as if to seek some support or outlet for her emotion. He

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laid his hand on her's quietly, and said, "It is a wonderful power, to endow the tricks of the stage-carpenter with life, to carry one away as one sits here, into the regions of wild romance."

"Yes," said Vane, "it must be splendid to act when one can act like that."

"Splendid to act!" repeated Lilith, "how much more splendid it would be to do!"

Falcon looked at her seriously. Vane said, "I am afraid there is little opportunity for that, Miss Langenheim; the wood demons have had their day; civilisation has driven them from their haunts; and even if they were there, the courage to call them up might be wanting."

"I do not think it would be wanting in Miss Langenheim," said Falcon, with an inclination of his head to her.

"I am afraid it would not," said her father abstractedly.

Soon after this Falcon rejoined his sister and brother-in-law, not before he had made arrangements for going soon to see how Mr. Langenheim's picture was getting on.

The Greys and Falcon drove home in a silence which was only broken by Sir Harry observing in his cheerful tones, "A very attractive little girl, that Miss Langenheim. You seemed to find lots to say to her, Falcon. Now, I never can tell what to talk to her about; I can't make up my mind whether she's laughing at me or not." The only reply he received to this remark was a warning look from his wife. Falcon seemed lost in abstraction, and did not display any consciousness of what had been said.

Lady Emmy observed him with some anxiety, and when he said good-night, looked closely at him with her kind grey eyes, and said, "Falcon, dear, remember what I said to you: do take care what you are about."

He replied: "Dear little Emmy, don't you think I am old enough to take care of myself?" and then walked on to his club, where he encountered Vane, who received him with "Well, Falcon, how did you like the opera to-night?"

"I liked it much; it is a fine opera, and very dramatic; it appeals both to eye and ear."

"Ille mi par esse deo videtur,
Ille si fas est superare divos
Qui sedens adversus identidem te
Spectat et audit,
Dulce ridentem."

quoted Vane, mischievously.

"I was speaking of the opera," answered Falcon, with a slight smile.

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"And thinking of it? Answer me now the question I asked you some time ago—what do you think about Miss Langenheim?"

"I told you when you asked me, that I do not form my opinions quickly; but I will tell you this much now, I think a good deal about her."

"So!" said Vane. And how does the music get on? Have you begun the oratorio that is to astonish the world yet?"

"I will tell you another thing," said Falcon, "I have not written a note for a week."

"Oh!" replied Vane, "I have got an answer to my first question now."

Falcon, as he walked back to his rooms that night, bent his thoughts in the direction which for some time past they had been accustomed to follow. He now began to recognise plainly the fact that Lilith Langenheim had become the centre of his feelings and reflections. He had gone on carefully observing her, thinking over her, ever since the first occasion of their meeting; he had intended to wait and see whether the impression made upon him then was in truth of that strength which he was disposed to assign to it, or whether he at last had fallen by chance into that way of transient emotions which his cousin Arthur had followed for so long. But this waiting upon the passions, this endeavour to separate as it were one's identity from one's emotions, is a dangerous feat to attempt. While Falcon had thought to watch the current of his feelings from a safe post of observation, and stem it if need be, he had been swept down by it, and he now perceived that it would task his strength severely to get out of the stream in which he was plunged; and thinking over matters, he came to the conclusion that on the whole he did not want to get out of it; it was good to go down yet further with the stream, and reach perhaps its ultimate goal, whether that should prove a quiet lake or a stormy sea. Having resolved his doubts, and made up his mind thus far, he went to his piano, and succeeded in composing a piece of solemn recitative tolerably to his own satisfaction.

Vane's reflections as he walked home were of a vaguer kind. Scenes from the opera mingled with recollections of Lilith flitted across his mind. He had begun to like her much, and thought she had been most unjustly and hardly spoken of by those who found fault with her. She was not to be blamed if she had a caressing kind of manner; it was stupid of young men to think it was meant for them alone; why he, who was always ready to plunge deep into a flirtation, had never misinterpreted it. She was clever too, and seemed to have an individuality and a will of her own, which it was a relief to meet with in these dead-level days. He could imagine making a friend of such a woman. Then he wondered if he was right in thinking that Falcon was becoming seriously attached to her—it certainly looked

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rather like it. If it was so, and if it resulted, as it well might, in a marriage, why then it would probably turn out very well, and no one would be more glad of it than himself. Such was the train of Vane's thoughts, and such he fancied was their conclusion; but Vane had not Falcon's power of looking into himself. Among the multitude of his impressions it was possible for those of the greatest importance to be hidden and kept out of sight by the lighter ones which crowded each other on the surface of his mind.

The next week or two, during which time the two young men met several times at Mr. Langenheim's studio, and took part in visits with him and his daughter to plays and picture galleries, confirmed Falcon in his growing devotion to Lilith, while to Vane she continued to appear different from other girls, in that she commanded his steady regard.

Lady Emmy watched what was going on with anxiety, while Sir Harry was at one time actuated by his somewhat careless good-nature to assist Falcon in arranging meetings with the Langenheims, at another overcome with remorse at seeing the trouble which the state of affairs gave to his wife.

It was some three weeks after that visit to the opera, which has been recorded, that the two young men met at the painter's studio for the ostensible purpose of looking at the 'Queen Mab' picture before it received the final touches from his hands.

They and Mr. Langenheim stood in front of the picture, the artist with the air of a man, on the whole, well content with what he had done, but yet careful and thoughtful about it. Vane assumed the critic, looked at it with eyes shaded with his hands, walked a little way from it, and then returned to his former place with a wise shake of the head. Falcon's aspect was singularly impassive. Lilith flitted about around them as they looked, with the grace and noiselessness of a cat, while her eyes as they wandered from Vane to Falcon and from Falcon to Vane shone with glee. "Well," said Mr. Langenheim, after some time, bending his brows at Vane, "what do you think of it? what suggestions have you to make?"

"Only one of any importance," replied Vane, "and even if you should think that worthy of attention, it may be too late to act upon it. There is an impatient expression on 'Queen Mab's' face which seems to me out of keeping, out of character, with the subject. She is surrounded by an adoring court, and has every reason to be well content. Why should she have that restless, craving look?"

"Ah, bah!" replied the artist. "You must not judge her by too high a standard; mortal heads may be uneasy under a crown, and restless with all the appearance of happiness, and fairies are not a bit more accountable for their actions than mortals. Are they, Lilith?" he said, turning to her.

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"No, indeed, papa," she answered, pressing her hand on his arm, and nestling her head on his shoulder, while she looked softly up into his eyes. He looked down at her with an expression half delighted, half regretful.

"Come, Mr. Vane," he said, as he gently disengaged himself from her, "will you give me your opinion on the arrangement of the light in this corner? You will see it is the same kind of effect that I have got in this large picture of the 'Brocken.'" He walked up to the picture over the mantelpiece, whither Vane followed him; while Falcon continued to gaze at 'Queen Mab,' and Lilith to gaze at Falcon."

"Lord Falcon," she said presently, "have you any objections to make?" He turned, and as he looked at her the impassibility of his expression suddenly broke up and softened. "Only one objection," he said, with grave deliberation, "it does not do justice to the original."

Lilith made no answer to this, save by her low-toned laugh, which might have almost any interpretation, according to the frame of mind of the person to whom it was addressed; and at this moment there came a sudden cry from Vane, and a noise of something falling.

One stride brought Falcon to the aid of his cousin. The large picture at which he and the artist were looking had suddenly broken away from its fastenings, and dropped, with all its weight, towards Mr. Langenheim, on whose head it must have fallen had not Vane interfered, with dexterous agility, and broken its fall with his arm. Falcon helped him to lower the picture gradually, while Lilith rushed to her father and inquired anxiously, "Are you hurt, papa?" to which he replied, "No, but I might have been killed but for Mr. Vane." Then turning to Vane, she said, "How can I thank you enough, dear Mr. Vane, for saving papa?" thrust out both her little hands and clasped his in them. She looked full into his eyes, and held his hands for some moments in hers, and then cried with quick sympathy, "Your hand is shaking dreadfully—you are hurt!"

"No, no," said Vane, "it is nothing, it is only the effect of a sudden strain—I am not hurt; indeed, I assure you, I am not hurt." He pressed her hands for an instant as he spoke, as though to convey more strongly this assurance, and his delight at her father's safety.

Soon after this incident Vane, who had an engagement, took his departure; and Lilith presently going out of the room to give directions to a servant, Falcon was left alone with Mr. Langenheim. His thoughts and feelings had been gradually shaping themselves into a final form for some days past, and now he gave them expression in words.

He stood up and faced the painter, looking, with his dignified bearing, his well cut features, and the generous, fearless expression in his clear, deep eyes, like one of Titian's portraits.

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"Mr. Langenheim," said Falcon, "I am going to ask you a very serious thing."

The painter, with as much dignity of aspect, though of a different kind, bowed his head in token of readiness to listen, and knit his brows together as if to see more clearly from under their shelter.

"I ask you," went on Falcon, "to do for me the utmost that you can do for any man: I ask you to deliver up to my keeping that which must be more precious to you than anything on earth: to entrust me with the life and happiness of your daughter—if she will come to me. Of my love for her, of the joy that will enter into my life if I am so happy as to be the guardian of hers, I think I need hardly speak."

"Lord Falcon," replied Mr. Langenheim, after a short pause, "I do not know the man whom I would so willingly—so gladly, let me say—see Lilith's husband as yourself. You have spoken truly in saying that she is more precious to me than anything on earth. I am always anxious for her; I think I always shall be anxious for her, even if she is in the keeping of one whom I esteem so highly as I do you. She is unlike other girls, poor child! Since she was four years old she has had no mother. But all this is wandering from the matter in hand. I have told you what I think as to that myself; it is more important to know what Lilith thinks. If she thinks with me—well; if not let me assure you that I shall be grieved. I cannot pretend to interpret her feelings to you in any way; and if I could I have no doubt you would rather hear them explained by herself. If you will wait here I will ask her to come to you."

The two men, neither of whom was given to much display of emotion, interchanged a grip of the hand, and Falcon was left alone.

As has been said, he had sifted and examined his mind thoroughly before he had spoken; he had arrived at the sure decision that if he gained that which he asked for he would gain the greatest happiness that life could give him; on the other hand, if it should be denied to him, he must bear the denial without flinching. Therefore, however quickly his heart might have been beating, with whatever violence doubts and fears and hopes might have been rushing and chasing each other through his brain, he preserved a calm attitude and exterior, which he disturbed only by one quick, eager stride forward as Lilith entered the room.

She came in with a step slower than her ordinary one, and her head was bent towards the ground; but her eyes shone with the same triumphant light which had been in them on the first occasion of her meeting Falcon in this room.

"You will have heard from your father, Miss Langenheim," Falcon began, as soon as they were near to each other, "of the purpose

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with which I have sought this interview. Since first I met you—how long ago that was I can hardly tell, for of late I have kept count of time only by your presence or absence—I have thought of little else but you. Happiness has been since then found nowhere for me save in the sound of your voice, the light of your eyes, the touch of your hand. I can never love anyone else as I love you. I have come here to-day to ask you if you can make that happiness mine for ever; if you will be my wife."

He spoke steadily and slowly, but with a passionate anxiety which was none the less evident because it was repressed; he stood now with his hands clasped together in front of him, looking down at Lilith with grave, waiting eyes. She had raised her head but once during his speech, to dart at him a swift look. "What a noble bearing," she thought, as she lowered her glance again; "what a strength of will; what a power of self-command." In the brief interval during which she stood silent and motionless after his last words, many thoughts and feelings passed in swift succession through her mind; a joy that this moment had come which she had long ago determined should come; a triumphant delight in her power over such a man as Lord Falcon; a passing remembrance of Arthur Vane, and a wonder as to what his feelings would be when he heard of this; then came for an instant a vague feeling of dread, at what—whether at Falcon or at herself, or at what she was about to do, she could not tell; and the next moment she looked up at him with the confiding, tender smile which was one of her charms, and held out her hand to him, saying—

"I should love of all things to make you happy, and if you think that will make you happy, I will be your wife."

He seized her hand, and kissed it passionately, and then clasped her in a close embrace.

"If I think!" he cried. "My darling, what happiness in the whole world can there be like mine now? Till this moment I never knew how bright the world was."

"Not even when you listened to great music?" she asked playfully.

"Sweetest, there is more music for me now in one word from your lips," he replied, "than in all the operas, all the sonatas which the world contains."

He led her to one of the large chairs which stood about the room, and sat down in a lower one by her side, holding her hand and looking up into her face. She looked at him as if in doubt or perplexity for a moment, and then a lost, far-away expression came into her eyes, seeing which he said, "Of what are you thinking, dear?"

"I don't quite know," she answered with a little start; "but I fancy I was thinking that you have known me a very short time."

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"Love takes no thought of time," he answered.

"And I do not think you know me very well," she went on, paying no attention to his reply.

"I know that I love you very well."

"For that reason you think too well of me; people often do. I am neither so good nor so clever as you think me; and I feel as if I ought to tell you that. It is true, indeed it is."

Falcon was enchanted with her frankness. "Darling," he said, "you must let me be judge as to that. "I know you better than you know yourself."

"I do not think any one knows me well. I do not know myself—so perhaps it may be that you do know me better. You do love me, don't you?" she answered with a quick change of voice.

"With my whole being," he replied passionately.

At this moment Mr. Langenheim's step was heard outside the door, and he, entering the room, saw by Falcon's expression what answer Lilith had given him. "I see," he said as he came towards them. "My fairy, I congratulate you on your choice. Lord Falcon, I need not repeat what I have already said to you," and once again he pressed Falcon's hand warmly.

It was now late in the afternoon, and Falcon took his leave till the next day. As he went he stooped to caress Lilith's great Persian cat, which lay in his usual place on the rug.

"Take care!" cried Lilith; "he will bite and scratch you; he is apt to scratch at every one but me, and he is cross to-day."

She ran forward to intercept his hand, but it was too late; the cat had torn it already, and she caught it only in time to transfer to her own tiny fingers some of the blood stain which the animal's claws left on Falcon's hand. She gave a little shudder as she looked at the mark. Falcon, seeing it, said, "A bad omen; but we will laugh omens to scorn."

The artist, however, frowned, and said in harsh tones, "You should keep your pets in better order, Lilith."

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A Night Terror in Africa.

I HAVE some doubts about the psychological bearings of fear. In old English, "perplexity" was often used as its equivalent, and it seems a pity that this usage has been dropped. We want a word for fear that would express a kind of mental syllabub. Dr. Johnson, following Locke, defines fear as "a painful apprehension of future danger." Now I confess that I do not like the word "apprehension," which means a *laying hold*, because I cannot help concluding that fear is altogether a *letting go*. If logicians would let me, I would define fear *per metaphoram*, and call it "resentment at being kicked out of one's rut." The most philosophical remark of Falstaff's was that he was a "coward upon instinct. When all our instincts, which are but sublimated habits, are turned topsy-turvy, then we know what fear is. Though your particular rut *must* lead to the cannon's mouth, you are cheerful and impavid in it as a man just and firm of purpose should be; but when you are kicked into a neighbouring rut which *may* lead to the Hesperides, the blood freezes in your veins. Luckily a perfect terror, an utter annihilation of all ruts whatsoever, an overhead plunge into the unknown, comes but once or twice in any man's life. The occasion may be trivial. A belated jackass, the love-plaint of a feline Sappho, a brawl of rodents behind the wainscot, a pendent night-shirt whose fluttering tails are visited by playful moonbeams—any of these things is sufficient. Or the occasion may be great; a convulsion of nature, or the approach of death in a strange garb. It matters not. The supreme moment of terror, when the scalp lifts like the lining of a hat, when a man is clothed from head to foot in a raiment of "goose-skin," when the knees refuse to bend, and are yet too weak to keep straight, and when the heart feels like the kernel of a rotten nut—*that* moment is never to be forgotten. Then the man feels the natural and the supernatural, the real and the ideal, the subject and the object, the *ego* and the *non ego*, the present and the remote, all jumbled together in a mad dance through his bewildered consciousness. Then Pope's line is reversed and sense leans for aid on metaphysic. Then the man discerns how infinitely little he is when reduced within his own circumference; how dependent he has been on a tiny world, outside which he is "quenched in a boggy Syrtis." Then he discovers how necessary to his happiness are the ordinary conditions of thought, and that, if he only knew it, the

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most awful, the most intensely horrible thing the imagination can conceive of, is a syllogism with an alien conclusion. Then, for an instant, he learns what it is to be dead.

The qualifications of a perfect terror are three. It must be unexpected; it must be absolutely incomprehensible; and it must culminate like a nightmare. Once I had a terror which so perfectly fulfilled these requirements that no man may hope to have a better.

This thing happened to me in the city of Pieter-Maritzburg, in the colony of Natal; and in order that I may tell my tale intelligibly, I may be allowed to give some short description of the place. The city is named from one Pieter Maritz, whose sacred bard I have never met with, and the memory of whose deeds, therefore—of the pounds of Boer tobacco he smoked in a green-stone pipe, of the hollands he drank, of the wide trousers he wore, and of the Dutch oaths he swore—must for ever, as far as I am concerned, be 'whelmed in long night. Maritzburg (as the name is commonly abbreviated) is the seat of government and the headquarters of the garrison. All the other towns in Natal—Durban especially—which consider themselves not to be sneezed at, *are* sneezed at by Maritzburg. We are slightly aristocratic in Maritzburg; we have been known to wear gloves; we have caught a little of the hoity-toitiness that lingers round the purlieus of bureaucracy. In this respect Maritzburg is not remarkable; but in another respect, namely, brilliancy of colouring, Maritzburg is one of the most remarkable towns I ever saw. It lies on a shoulder of table-land, surrounded on three sides by an amphitheatre of hills, which to a European eye are singularly brown and barren of aspect. In the midst of this great ugly basin Maritzburg absolutely blossoms. All its roofs are of red tile, all its hedges are rose hedges, and nearly all its trees are peach trees; and thus, when peaches and roses are in bloom there is red and pink enough to make the town look like a gigantic nosegay. Another peculiarity of the town is very pleasant; one, two, or even three streams of bright, clear, swiftly-flowing water run down each street. A large head of water comes downwards on the town from the top of the shoulder on which it is built, and this water supply is subdivided as it enters the town into a multitude of small rivulets—or *sluyts*, as the Dutch call them. Thus, a street in Maritzburg is formed in the following way: each house stands well back from the road in its *erf* or plot of ground, then comes a thick and lofty hedge of roses, then a *sluyt*, then a raised footpath or causeway, then another *sluyt*, then the roadway. Now these *sluyts*, however much they may add to the cleanliness of the place, are exceedingly awkward to the pedestrian. Every *sluyt* is about a yard below the footpath, and being bridged over by innumerable slabs of stone and logs of wood, forms in fact a series of traps and pitfalls. If I have drawn my picture rightly, the reader will

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see that to walk along a footpath in Maritzburg on a dark night, without the assistance of a single street-lamp, requires some care, even if the mind is unoccupied and the senses under control; but to walk there on a dark night, hearing behind one the —— But I must proceed in due order.

On the night when the terror came to me I was returning from the fort at the top of the town to the hotel where I was staying, which was at the lower end. I had a distance of about one mile to walk. It was midnight. The night was dark, but not with a thick, murky darkness. There was no moon, and the sky was clouded over; but the edges of the horizon could be just distinguished, and the roadway and hedges made out with little trouble. In short, the night was not one in which a man has to grope his way, though he could hardly walk quickly and boldly. Every one had gone to bed, and not a light was visible in the street, except an oil lamp hanging before the hotel, the glimmer of which, the street being quite straight, I could see in the distance almost as soon as I started on my walk. There was no wind. All was so still that the liquid warbling of the frogs in the *vley* below the town sounded near and loud. Besides this, and the multitudinous murmur of nature, which she never wholly intermits in her most silent watches, and which one hears and hears not, there was perfect quiet.

I had got but a little way on my journey, walking cautiously along the raised footpath, when I became aware that I was followed. Close behind me the sound—very soft and gentle, but unmistakable—of a footfall made itself heard. I stopped, and the footfall stopped also. I could see nothing whatever, and the sound—though so faint as to be almost like an echo of my own steps—had appeared to be close at hand; not more, in fact, than three or four yards distant. I thought I had been mistaken, and walked on again. Yes! again came the footfall, and—no—*not* an echo. Whenever an echo is heard, there is a certain interval of time between the sound and its reverberation. This interval may be momentary—a mere fraction of a second—but is always appreciable; or rather, to put it another way, if the echo is appreciable, there must be an interval. Now, the rhythm—the "time" as rowing men would say—of this footfall was exact. As my foot touched the ground so did that other foot, in precise and unvarying coincidence. The character of the sound was very remarkable. The path was hard and firm, with many small stones scattered here and there, and with gravel sprinkled on it. My boots made a crunching noise as I walked. But this footfall was most evidently caused by feet that were neither shod, nor (being unshod) of a horny or hoofy kind. And yet, on the other hand, there was nothing of the dull thud that would be made by the naked foot of a man, or by any animal with a soft paw going pit-a-pat over the ground, as Bunyan

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describes it, "with a great padding pace." There was an undoubted impact on the gravel—of *that* I was sure—and beyond that I could liken the sound to nothing earthly. Again, the supposition that my follower was a beast was negatived by the too evident mockery of the sound. No beast, surely, would go to the trouble of "keeping time" with a belated wayfarer, and the cessation and renewal of these footsteps concurrently with mine proved that mockery was deliberately intended. I say *no* beast; but, perhaps, I ought to have excepted the ape tribe. A monstrous ape, whose mind was just developing to a human enjoyment of mischief, might have pleased his genius with this hideous mimicry. But an ape always walks with a shuffling, shambling gait, and for him the tripping levity of these steps would have been impossible. An ape is not accustomed to walk on two legs, and the creature that pursued me was so accustomed; there was a regularity and firmness in what I may call the accentuation of the tread, however gentle, light, and aerial that tread might be, which left no room for doubt.

When I first became conscious that I was being pursued of set purpose by a footfall, I was startled, but scarcely terrified. A savage beast was out of the question, and Maritzburg was entirely free from crimes of violence: the white inhabitants were too well off to become highway robbers; while to attack one of the superior race was quite alien from the habits and ideas of the Coolie or Kafir population. I began, then, by being more curious than alarmed. But as the strangeness of the circumstance forced itself more and more on my attention my curiosity soon passed through fear to horror. I tried in vain to convince myself that I was mistaken. I stopped short at least half-a-dozen times, and then walked on with a quick impulse. I walked as fast as I could; I took short strides—long strides; I sauntered slowly (this was very difficult); but all to no purpose. Exactly as I did so did the footfall; stopping when I stopped, and keeping perfect time with my varied paces. Only one thing I noticed, and that was a slight hesitation when I suddenly changed my steps from fast to slow, from long to short, or *vice versâ;* as if the thing that followed me could not instantaneously accommodate itself to the change. But this hesitation was only momentary. Indeed, the versatile quickness, with which its gait was made to correspond with mine through every mode of puzzling alternation, was something marvellous. No drum-major ever had such command over the rhythm of motion.

In the surprise and terror now gradually stealing over me it will easily be imagined how difficult it was to keep a footing on the raised causeway. More than once I all but slipped into the *sluyt*, and whenever I did stumble a feeling of unsurmountable alarm came over me that, if I fell, something would be *on* me and *at* me. It was better to be upright on two shaky legs, which might be called on for

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instant flight, than prone in a ditch, helpless, and with I knew not what stalking jauntily around. No; I was sure I could walk no longer on the causeway. With sudden resolution, I jumped a floundering, stumbling, headlong jump from the path, over the *sluyt* that ran on the roadway side, and got on the broad road itself. Having gained the middle of the road, I stood still and listened. At first there was silence. Then I heard my own jump exactly repeated in faint, ethereal mimicry. I heard the same stumbling jump, the same long strides, the same little run of recovery on the road. I could bear it no longer. "Who's there?" I shouted.

The only certain theory respecting 'The Night-side of Nature' at which, after diligent study of Mrs. Crowe and other approved writers, I have been able to arrive, is, that it is bad, fatally bad, policy to speak to anything uncanny—a ghost, for instance. If ever you meet with a companion who seems likely to turn round the corner of bogeydom, remember that "Silence is golden," and that speech is exceedingly base metal. The probability of this theory is easily demonstrated. When you speak to an uncanniness you thereby—*ipso facto*—recognise it; you promote it to a *raison d'être*. The popular superstition that a ghost cannot speak unless spoken to is founded on strictly logical reasoning. By addressing an uncanniness in words, however bold and masterful, you at once limit your range of available hypotheses to two: you confess, by implication, that the thing you address must be either a *human* being or a *supernatural* being. There is no escape from the alternative. You do not hold converse with a hallucination, an extraordinary shadow, an unexpected light, a mysterious sound, an inexplicable phenomenon. If you are strong-minded enough to infer that your visitant is the result of a heedless supper, you do not (in default of a medicine chest) exorcise by any form of words the bit of cucumber that is troubling you. By speaking you personify, where it is for the interest of your sanity that personality should be out of the question. Treat, then, a ghost with the insular pride of an Englishman. Consider him a foreigner, and therefore a suspicious character, of whose social status you cannot be sure. Domineer over him by not saying "How d'ye do?" If you so much as "pass the time of day" with him, your acquaintance ripens with awful rapidity into intimacy of the closest. It is far better, if the temptation to speak becomes too strong, to retire at once under the bed-clothes, when that friendly shelter is present, and abstract your thoughts altogether from what may be outside. It is not, I believe, within the memory of the chroniclers that any uncanny thing has ever attempted to lift the shrouding drapery. You may, indeed, feel somewhat ticklish about those lumpy and angular parts which mark out the human outline, however deeply smothered under blankets; but you are—if there is truth in history—absolutely safe. And if

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there is no haven of blankets and counterpanes, and the thing *must* be faced, recollect—cleave, cling to the recollection—that supernatural etiquette does not permit a grisliness to introduce itself. The golden sceptre of speech must first be held out.

I had, I say, made a shocking blunder in speaking. And yet I almost think I should have been relieved by an answer. But not so much as a *Hem!* was vouchsafed in reply; there was not the faintest whisper of a voice; it was *nil, et præterea nil*—absolute nothingness, made sensible by a footfall. There was nothing for it but to walk on. But now I had not the smallest remnant of reason left: that *divinæ particula auræ* had quite deserted me. I now pursued my way, as Coleridge says,

> "Like one, that on a lonesome road
> Doth walk in fear and dread,
> And having once turned round, walks on,
> And turns no more his head,
> Because he knows a frightful fiend
> Doth close behind him tread."

Just so I walked, and the footfall pattered softly behind me.

The question, "What is it?" had by this time tenfold horrors. It may, perhaps, be suggested that I was no longer able to follow out any inquiry; but I *was*; only, by my insensate rashness of speech, I had shut myself out from any natural explanation. I was *ex hypothesi* confined to the supernatural. I could not even, as the satirist says, "hold the eel of science by the tail." The thing that dogged me was, I was compelled to think, either, first, a visitor from superior regions, or, secondly, a visitor from inferior (*very* inferior) regions; or, thirdly, no visitor at all, but a lingerer who ought to be elsewhere when the cock crew. Oh, for the welcome summons of an ear-splitting cock-a-doodle-do! Oh, for a steam fire-engine fed by a river of holy water! The sheer mischievousness of the trick narrowed my speculations by forbidding the notion of celestial ministry. I was driven, irresistibly propelled, to the alternative of "auld Hornie" (by self or agent) *or* some wandering ghost who had business with me. As to the first supposition, I was unable to adopt the reasoning of Robinson Crusoe under very similar circumstances. When that solitary was frightened out of his wits by the apparition of a footprint on the sands of his desert island, he comforted himself by the conclusion that it could not have been the arch enemy, because, says Robinson, "as I lived quite on the other side of the island, he would never have been so simple as to leave a mark in a place where it was ten thousand to one whether I should ever see it or not, and in the sand, too, which the first surge of the sea upon a high wind would have defaced entirely." And he continues: "All this seemed inconsistent with the thing itself, and with all notions we usually entertain of the

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subtlety of the devil." With the deepest respect for Robinson Crusoe's metaphysical and theological powers, evidenced in his conversations with Friday—powers in which I confess myself far his inferior—I cannot in this one instance admit the cogency of his reasoning. If the alarming footprint had been made by the gentleman in question, *non constat* that it was not formed on the sands by a viewless foot a second or two before Robinson came up to the spot. Thus the reflection so comforting to the sagacious mariner vanishes at once. Robinson, thou reasonest *not* well. But there was a very different reflection equally applicable to his case and to mine. I do not say that it is deducible from the principles of scientific theology—I leave that to the General Assembly—but I distinctly remember that it struck me very forcibly, even in my extremest fright. It was this: What end could be served by the terrifying to imbecility of a harmless nightwalker? If divines have not instructed us to little purpose, we all believe that the "muckle-horned Clootie" has serious business in hand. He has no leisure for idle schoolboy tricks. Even if practical jokes were consonant with his imperial dignity, his sterner duties leave him no time for pranks which would better befit the idleness of a cavalry subaltern. This consideration would be weighty in Europe, much more in South Africa, which, from the mere fact of its being sparsely populated, must be looked on as comparatively out of his way. The whole mediæval theory of witchcraft appears to me to have gone astray simply by missing this train of reasoning. Was I not, therefore, justified in rejecting the intervention of him whom, in the north of England, with a quaint recognition of his perennial youth conjoined with senile cunning, they call "th' ould lad?" Stay; he has underlings. *Qui facit per alium facit per se.* Cob, Mob, and Chittabob were doubtless at liberty. If their annals are writ true, it would just suit their tastes to "tickle the catastrophe" of a shuddering mortal. Yes, here *was* a flaw in my calculations; but, as a matter of fact, I did not think of Cob, Mob, and Chittabob. I was thus reduced to the last hypothesis, namely, that a ghost was dogging me. I do not mean, of course, to assert that in the rush of excited surmises which passed through my mind, I actually reasoned as consecutively as I am now setting down my thoughts. I only wish it to be understood that, after taking leave of my scientific senses by the unpardonable folly of speaking, I came finally to some such conclusion by some such method.

I was now walking with all my speed, but my utmost speed (though I have always been reputed a pretty good stepper) seemed that awful no speed of dreams, when one is agonised with an imaginary need for haste or flight, and is yet ridden by the inexorable nightmare at a snail's pace. I was very warm in front, but cold chills shivered down my spine. The distance still to be traversed seemed interminable and

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hopeless. What with the darkness, and what with the dire necessity of turning my head every moment to look backwards, I walked a dreadfully zigzag course. The footsteps I never ceased to hear; regular when mine were regular, irregular when mine were irregular. Again and again I called, but no response ever came. Once, in a fit of desperation, I stopped, flung my arms about, stamped violently, and *shoo'd* with all my might, like one attempting to frighten away intruding cats or birds. When I had made this silly demonstration, there was first a pause, and then the footsteps disdainfully and slowly danced *round* me in a half-circle, from right to left and back again. When I proceeded, they followed, as they had done, directly behind.

Walking in this way I came to a part of the road where it became a little wider, and also, there being fewer trees to overshadow it, a little lighter. Now for the first time I *saw* something. In one of my terrified backward glances I saw that the footsteps were accompanied by a globular apparition. It seemed about a foot in diameter, and of a dusky grey colour. This dim, undefined ball of misty hue moved with the footsteps, but not, as far as I could distinguish, having any other connection with them. On the contrary, it moved through the air at the distance of about a yard from the ground, as if self-supported. I say "moved," because I could just discern a sort of undulatory rise and fall, and because I could not but notice that the interval between me and it was never diminished by my greatest efforts. The airy phantom neither approached nor receded. Soon after I saw this apparition, I also heard something I had not heard before. It was a rustling noise, repeated once or twice, and most like a quick shudder passing through stiff drapery. If any doubt remained, if any accession of terror was possible, that doubt now fled, that accession of terror now came.

It occurs to me that some reader may ask why in the name of fortune or misfortune, there being houses on both sides of the street, I did not seek shelter and protection. Pride, my dear reader, pride, stronger than all terror, strongest of all human feelings. What would you, my reader, say if you were knocked up at midnight by a gentleman with a scared look and an incoherent story of a spectre? Would you not take the strongest horsewhip, unchain Pincher, and (while your spouse's eloquence flowed "sweeter than honey" from her chamber window, and all your children screamed in their cots,) go forth to drive the intruder from your curtilage? Of course you would. Would you not tell the distressed suppliant to go to him from whom and from whose emissaries and shadowy liegemen he was seeking deliverance? Of course you would. If you happened to know the disturber of your peace, would you not reproach him the next morning, hint at soda-water, and generally wonder at him? Of course

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you would. And if you believed his story—what then? Hospitality has its limits. Could you be expected to open your door to a friend who might be arm in arm with "the Black Man," as Matthew Hopkins would have called him? Human sympathy does not extend to helping one's fellow-creatures against the supernatural. I question if the most tender-hearted, stanch, and chivalrous man that ever lived would not have left St. Dunstan and his opponent to "have it out." And the house, at the portal of which you implored aid, might be tenanted by none but lonely women. When the female body is wrapt in night attire and the female head is coroneted with curl papers the female mind is apt to dwell on water-jugs and kitchen pokers. A Niobe in a night-cap, at any moment between midnight and sunrise, has a concentrated power of squealing which one durst not even think of. Nor could the most frightful apparition excuse an Englishman for seeking the protection of a woman. Forbid it, memories of Cressy and Poictiers! And yet I would confine my valour to proper limits. I would not for the world imply that memories of Cressy and Poictiers should rob any Englishman of his prerogative of being frightened at a ghost; especially in these modern days, when it has become most necessary to insist on that prerogative. Our "fathers of war-proof" were frightened, and *they* believed in ghosts; much more ought we, on every principle of common sense, to be frightened—we, who do not believe in them. I cherish (as a pleasant inward protest against the Positivism of the age) the conviction that, if a ghost of the commonest turnip-headed, saucer-eyed description could be turned loose in the meeting-room of the Royal Society, we should see the extremest extremity of terror which human countenances are capable of expressing. I ought, however, in honesty to add that memories of Cressy and Poictiers did not occur to me much on this occasion; but I did not seek shelter.

I had walked perhaps two-thirds of the distance when I became aware of the apparition, and how I got over the remaining ground I can hardly tell. I did not dare to run. I felt that, if I ran, all self-control, all resisting power of will, would be gone. I had a sort of suspicion that, if I even appeared to hurry, I should be overpowered by some force which could only be kept in check by the exercise of a defiant volition.

I was now within a very short distance of my hotel—not more than three or four hundred yards away. But I had a foreboding that I should never reach it before another phase of the horror was disclosed. The thing was growing on me. Some *dénouement* must come. It *did* come.

I had by this time arrived at a large building, used as a Kafir chapel by those natives who had been brought by various civilising agencies to wear trousers and sing hymns. What other goal of

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learning was before them I cannot say; but I am in a position to state that, at this particular period, a respectable number of Zulus had renounced the error of bare legs, and had taken to sing hymns with much fervour and perseverance. I do not think they were particular about words—any words which were not downright swearing did for *them*—and I am sure they were not particular about tune. In his unenlightened state, the Kafir will sit for hours chanting a kind of plain-song, and accompanying himself with a barbarous *tum-tiddy-tum* produced from a stringed instrument like a bow. When his mind is enlarged by instruction, he puts on trousers, and sings his plain-song to a form of words in which references to the *assegai*, the *knob-kerry* (or Kafir club), and the blood of his foes, are only introduced when the singer is carried away by the violence of his emotions. His "doxy" may be described as that of the Indians of South America, mentioned by Humboldt, who are said to be *baxa la campana*—as Paganism vibrating with the tinkle of a church bell. Turning the corner of the chapel I came upon a party of devotees seated round a fire, and even at that late hour in full tide of song. How it was that I had not heard them before, nor seen the reflection of their fire, I cannot say; but when I did hear and see, I felt with a thrill of conviction that the Zulu is indeed "a man and a brother." They were a party of six or seven. One or two were Hottentot waggon-drivers, and the rest Kafirs. Every man was busy unburdening his soul without "remorse or mitigation of voice;" and the joint effect was something like what might be produced by the butcher, the sweep, the milkman, and the watercress seller, all shouting the cries of their respective trades down one area in one breath. But I was in no humour for musical criticism. As soon as I saw the absorbed group I jumped across the *sluyt* and rushed towards those dusky brethren. As I got within the light of their fire I turned round.

Out of the darkness there stalked solemnly, with a grave and self-possessed air, a large crane; not one of the ordinary species, such as is seen in Europe, but the great gaunt "Kafir crane," as he is called in Africa—I know not his scientific name—which is at least twice as large. He did not seem in the smallest degree abashed, nor was he disconcerted. If anything was discernible in his bearing, it was, perhaps, a little conceit, as though he felt that he had done a clever thing in keeping pace with me so long; but I cannot say that he displayed much emotion of any kind. As I came to the fire he walked up to my side, holding his head absurdly far back, though he gave one or two drives or ducks forward with his long neck, as if saluting the company. He then stood still, rubbed his beak a few times against his legs, and regarded the Kafirs with great contempt, evidently not thinking much of their hymnology. Meanwhile the Kafirs looked at me and also at the crane, which they knew quite

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well. I tried to mutter that I wanted a light for my pipe, but something in the nervous haste of my manner gave them an inkling of the truth, for they all with one accord rolled over on their backs in agonies of laughter, and I was derided by sets of black toes in ecstasies; and therefore I withdrew with that dignity one of the higher Aryan race can always assume, and sought my hotel, still accompanied by the mimetic crane. When I reached the door of the hotel, I grieve to say that in sudden wrath I shied a stone at the crane, who went off again into the darkness with a hop and a skip of offended pertness and a flourish of his feathers, much as an ancient dame of quality might trot over a muddy street holding up and shaking out her flounces.

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Patricia Kemball.

Chapter XXXIV.

THE CLEFT STICK.

If Mr. Hamley had come down on James Garth, he was so far impartial in his dealings with man and man as to come down on Colonel Lowe as well. He had to make it evident to Milltown that he, Ledbury's office-boy, had bought up one of the local aristoi, a "swell" who had married Lady Anne Graham's daughter;—and bought him up as easily as he had covered a poor paltry peasant. Besides, he had that need of action which comes after a disappointment; and, failing marriage and Lord Merrian, turned to Cragfoot and revenge. So it came that Colonel Lowe, being far behind-hand with his quarterly interest, received a notice from Mr. Simpson—all due legal forms being complied with—that his client who had lent the money had given notice to foreclose. Unless then, he could find some one else to take up the mortgage, his bad quarter of an hour was at hand, and his turn at the Hamley grindstone had come round.

Six months wherein to settle his affairs—six months wherein to find another capitalist who would lend sixty thousand pounds on a decaying property, with the quarterly interest always in arrears and getting yearly more difficult to find:—It was a bad look out for the Colonel; but to do him justice he faced the gloomy prospect manfully, and gave way to no weakness of hopeful gilding by which folks so often make bad appear good and present ruin look like future fortune. He only cursed his evil stars, and that fatal luck of his which had landed him in this hole. Had any of the thousand and one fortunate probabilities come off which never do come off for the gain of amateur gamblers, or any of the unfortunate accidents not happened which always do happen to overwhelm those who are tempted to their destruction on the Turf, the Colonel would have stood to win ever so many hatfulls. But all his bets turned the wrong way; and instead of bringing himself home, as he had hoped, he had plunged heavily —each time more heavily than the last—losing with a persistency of miscalculation that should have warned him, had he been of the kind to accept warnings, and that as it was looked liked Nemesis. The upshot of it, however, was, that he stood now on the very verge of ruin, with only one chance left—Sydney's marriage with Julia Manley and her hundred thousand pounds.

If the boy would not marry her—and he had not made a move that

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way—they were all done for; but his father had not kept him about him all his life not to know something of his nature; not to know, above all, that poverty was just the thing Syd would not accept, let what would be the means by which he would creep out of the net; and that when the fix came he would get money somehow, by any act of treachery or dishonour compatible with his position as a gentleman. He had no fear of the result when affairs pressed seriously; and the day after he received the notice he resolved to make a final appeal to his son's good sense and right feeling, and having done this to abide the issue—of which he had no doubt. Once convinced that his only course, as a man and a gentleman, was to marry a woman utterly distasteful to him in every sense but that of a convenient banking account—and the thing was done. To be sure, he was hard to convince; but then he was young; and young men are self-willed at times, and the elder and wiser must have patience.

Colonel Lowe had never himself shown to greater advantage than he did to-day, when, for the second time, he went thoroughly into his affairs with his son, and placed the whole condition of things clearly before him. Nothing could exceed the delicacy with which he stated the only chance of escape left them, unless it was his manly frankness, his paternal tenderness. Sydney was selfish, insolent, ill-tempered, weak—had a thousand faults for one virtue; but he did really love his father, and the difficulties of his own position were increased by the desire he honestly had to help the Colonel, and set him free from his embarrassments. Had he not been Dora's husband he would have been Julia Manley's within the month; but what could he do? He was in a cleft stick, and there was only one move which could free him. And that one move—would Dora consent to it? Before he compromised himself here he must be quite sure there. He believed that she would release him; for she loved poverty no better than himself; but until he was assured he must fence off a promise, and fall back on his personal reluctance as his safest card to play. He thought he could compel her; he felt convinced he could when he had once made up his own mind, just as his father felt convinced about himself; but between love and doubt, that vacillating mind of his was not made up as yet, but was tossed like a football, now by his affection for his father, now by his hatred of poverty, now by love for Dora, then by doubt of her acquiescence, and then by his repugnance to the alternative.

"I loathe the woman!" he said passionately. "Of all the women I know Miss Manley is the most detestable in my eyes."

"Poor Julia!" said his father. "She is no beauty, I confess; but she is very amiable, and she has a hundred thousand pounds at her disposal."

"It is frightful," said Sydney covering his face. "But I will

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think of it. I can say no more. If I can I will; but the sacrifice is maddening."

"I only ask you to think of it, my dear boy," replied the Colonel gently. "I am so sure of your good sense that I have no fear of your decision when you have once given your mind to it. I do not think that you could bear to see the old place sold and given over to that shoeblack, as it will be if we cannot raise the money somehow. Nor do I think you will like to begin life on your own account as a clerk in some office, with not as many shillings a-week as you have been accustomed to have pounds. And yet—I see no other chance for us."

"Why the deuce did you ever go on the Turf?" cried Sydney, with a sudden outburst of insolence.

His father shrugged his shoulders.

"Ah, yes," he answered tranquilly. "But if the favourite had won?"

"If!" cried Sydney; "a man ruins his family for an if."

"A little hard, but smart, my boy," said the Colonel quietly. "Of what consequence a few ill-tempered splutterings," he reflected philosophically, "if you can carry your point and get the main thing ruled to your liking? Syd might be as insolent as he chose, poor boy, if he would marry Julia Manley at the end. It amused him, blew off the steam, and hurt no one else—just the play of the fish before he was landed; a thing for which experienced anglers must be prepared." Still, the Colonel did not like his insolence. He would not quarrel with him for it, because it is impolitic to fall out with your tool; but he would stop it. So, rising, he laid his hand on the young man's shoulder, saying kindly, in his very best manner—frank, yet dignified, paternal, yet friendly—

"Don't worry yourself now, dear boy. Time is valuable, of course, but we are not going to be sold up to-night. Think it over, and see what you can do. If you feel that Julia, poor soul, is really impossible, well—we must face our ruin like men and gentlemen; but if you think you could marry her with some reasonable prospect of happiness after—and you know my belief on the subject—why, then we are saved, and old Hamley's triumph is cut from under him. I confess I shall be sorry if you decide against my wishes; but if it is for your happiness, old fellow, I shall not grudge my share of the bill we must pay."

"Curse Hamley and all his crew!" cried Sydney savagely.

"Yes, so say I too; curse Hamley!" repeated his father. "I would sit here and swear at him till all was blue, if that would do any good; but as it will not, we might as well save our energies for useful things."

On which he lighted his cigar and strolled away, very sorry for poor Syd, but decidedly of opinion that the best thing he could do was to

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get out of his presence as soon as possible, and that solitude was the safest condition for his son at the present moment.

After a little while spent in useless thinking and vain regrets, Sydney Lowe, also lighting a cigar, strolled away as his father had done; and, ordering his horse, went for a ride, to see if a hard gallop through the leafy lanes and across the moor would clear his brain so that he could discover how to make two and two five, and in what manner it would be possible to put back the hand of time and cut the knot that could not be untied. And while he was riding he found himself in the Long Field lanes, and came suddenly upon James Garth standing with his chin resting in the palms of his hands, staring fixedly across the fields where Mr. Hamley's men were working, and where, had he ventured, he would have been warned off as a trespasser.

A sudden thought seemed to strike Sydney as he passed the man. His wild and haggard face put a vague and misty idea that had been passing through his brain into tangible shape. Here was a man who, as well as themselves, had wrongs to revenge; a common peasant, therefore a creature without a conscience, and to be either bought or impressed. He rode forward for a short distance, then turned back and reined up as he came to Garth still standing where and as he had left him, his elbows on the gate and his chin resting in the palms of his hands.

"Good morning, Garth," said Sydney briskly.

The man looked up with the sidelong, quick, suspicious glance that had become habitual to him. He flung the young fellow a nod, but did not answer. Nothing disturbed him more than to be spoken to. He wanted to be left alone in the world, and to have no interruption to his mournful broodings.

"That's a sad sight, Garth," said Sydney, pointing with his whip to the fields. "I don't know when I was so sorry for anything as I was for this trouble of yours."

"Eh?" said Garth.

"I call it a damned shame," continued Sydney, speaking with energy; "a cruel, scandalous injustice."

Garth looked up. The passionate speech and accent of the gentleman struck him as odd. It was kind of him to feel so keenly for him, a poor man; but what call had a gentleman to take the sorrows of a horny-handed working-man to heart? It jarred him somehow; and yet it was kind.

"He laid his lines and he took it," said Garth slowly.

"Yes, I know all about that; and how you can stand there and see it all, I can't make out," said Sydney. "If the fellow had done as much by me, or half as much, I would have broken his head before now."

Garth's eye blazed out with sudden passion and his wan cheek

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flamed. He clenched his right hand and muttered something between his teeth. Sydney did not hear the words, but the look and the action were significant enough.

"That's what I say," repeated Colonel Lowe's son in a lower voice, and with a vicious kind of distinctness in his words. "If he had done as much by me, or half as much, I would have broken the fellow's head; and broken it so that it would not have been mended again in a hurry."

"It would be a good job done," said Garth as if to himself.

"A very good job!" said Sydney. "The fellow is the pest of the neighbourhood; a low-lived cur! He has neither the manners nor the feelings of a gentleman. If he got knocked on the head some dark night, there is not a soul in the place but would feel that a nuisance had been got rid of, and would be right thankful to the hand that had done it."

"A rich man and few friends," Garth muttered.

He still spoke as if to himself, as if Sydney Lowe had passed out of his sphere altogether.

"A blackguard, without one friend," said Sydney. "Why! how did he treat that nice girl of yours?—sent her off at a moment's notice because his wife had lost a pound or two! He did not dare to say why, but I happen to know that was the reason. What can you say of a man like that?"

James Garth made no reply; his face was still turned to the fields, his hand strongly clenched, his lips set, his eyes fixed and burning. A vision passed before him. He saw his enemy, the man who had tricked and sold him, walking before him in the evening darkness. He noted his jaunty stride, his chest thrown forward, his shoulders set square, his head well up, as a man who had conquered fortune and beaten all round in the game of life. He saw himself creeping after him with a stealthy step—a shadow dogging him as revenge dogs crime; he saw the distance gradually lessening, he gaining inch by inch upon him; he was creeping up to him, always in the shadow, till he was close—close; and now—

There was a cry that startled Sydney and made the men in the fields throw down their picks and spades and come hurrying to the gate.

"No! no! not murder! Good Lord! not murder!" shrieked James Garth, struggling and foaming. He had had an epileptic fit once before in his life; this was only a recurrence.

"Who said murder?" asked one of the men looking darkly at Sydney.

"And what's to do here, sir?" asked another.

"I do not know what it all means," Sydney answered. As he spoke his face changed, and his eyes had the look of a quick thought

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in them. "That poor fellow," he then went on to say with an air of charitable disdain—he was a gentleman now, speaking of a boor to his fellow-boors—"that poor fellow there seems to have had a bad kind of thought. We were talking of Hamley, and he said how infamously he had been used, and then suddenly shouted 'Murder!' I hope he was not thinking of doing for Mr. Hamley," with a slight smile that had a ghastly look in it.

"That's a hard word to say, sir," said one of the men sullenly. "James ain't the man to take life."

And Sydney, with a careless, "Well, I hope not; but murder has an ugly sound with it," rode away revolving.

That night he and Dora had an unreal kind of interview; but one in which he was defeated. Each wore a mask, and both fenced cleverly, with more feints than thrusts; but she was the stronger of the two and spoilt his game. He told her of his difficulties, his father's ruin, and the foreclosing of the mortgage. She sympathised with him in the dearest way, and complained of her own perplexities in the Hamley resolve to keep her as a kind of state prisoner at Abbey Holme for ever; and what could she do to help him? Between too little money and too much love, she thought life very hard and people very queer, she said, with a pretty shrug of her round uncovered shoulder—one of her nice little tricks that Sydney admired. He asked for her counsel as to what he should do, as she could not help him, and hinted at Miss Manley and her hundred thousand pounds; but she was too wise to take up his hint. She was determined that what he wanted her to know he should say in plain terms, leaving no loophole by which to creep out should things turn ill. Not that she wanted their marriage to continue, as things were, could it be safely broken. She would if she could have torn her marriage lines as she might have torn a milliner's bill that had been paid and done with. As she could not do that, she was not minded that Sydney should have any advantage she could not share.

She was so full of innocence and high-mindedness to-night, no man could possibly have proposed to her a crime to which she must give her assent—so full of sweetness and love, no man could have told her he meant treachery and desertion. He was foiled at every turn. She would not understand his hints, and he could not quarrel with her. How can any one quarrel with a sweet, amiable, lovely little girl, whose every accent is a caress, every word an endearment?—a soft, purring creature, sympathetic and responsive, and offering no more resistance than a ball of swansdown? The thing is impossible! You might as well try to play fives with that same ball of swansdown as cross swords with a woman of Dora Drummond's type when she has set her mind to yield and to fascinate, to guide by a silken thread—yet to hold with an iron hand.

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Ever since Sydney had made her take that roll of ten sovereigns Dora had begun to hate him, and to hate him all the more because she had begun to fear him. She did not know what horror he might not force her to commit, if his necessities urged; and she did not like the unhappiness of which he had been the cause. Soft, sensual, self-indulgent women never do like to see unhappiness; it disturbs and annoys them; and for all her capacities for cruelty if she was pushed to it, Dora was essentially good-natured when it did not cost her too much. Nevertheless, though she hated him to-night, she held him and she fascinated him, never having been more delightful, more endearing. Not that she would at any time have suffered herself to sink into the ordinary groove of English wives—that groove wherein they do not think it necessary to try to please their husbands; having got, not caring to retain. Had she detested the man who owned her she would have made herself none the less pleasant and coquettish to him. She might have poisoned him, and probably would, but she would have been careful to have handed him his dose of quietness with the prettiest little smile and in the most becoming little cap in the world. Ten minutes before she had eloped with her lover, she would have put her arms round her husband's neck and have called him a dear, and would have asked him if her dress was not pretty, and, smoothing her flounces, just the thing for a journey? Her creed was, that if disagreeable things had to be done, there was not the smallest reason why they should not be done pleasantly; and if jalap has to be taken, in the name of humanity smother it well in jam!

Sydney understood nothing of all this. He saw her as she chose he should see her, and took her at her own valuation. Had things gone well with them, he would never have seen her other than as the sweetest and most amiable little girl the world had ever produced; he would have been even a better man through the soothing influence of her assumed virtues, just as the Hamleys were both happier and better through that same influence. He would have lived and died and have never learnt the truth to the last—not when he kissed her hand as she gave him the poisoned cup, and blessed his friend for whose sake she had given it. These women—soft and false—have ever been the women men love best. They have their uses; and one is that they sometimes avenge their honester sisters.

When they were about to part, Sydney said half-jokingly, half-seriously: "What would you do, Dody, if I was forced to marry Julia Manley?"

"Syd!" she answered, her cheek on his shoulder, "as I cannot imagine anything so dreadful, I cannot say what I would do."

"You would scarcely give me in custody for bigamy?" he laughed.

"Why not, dear?" asked Dora, innocently.

"Why not? Because you would not like to be the wife of a felon,

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in the first place; nor a poor little lost love, turned out of house and home and having to work for your living, in the second," he answered.

"As if I should mind what became of myself in such a horrible position as that!" was her reply. "There are two things for which all women, who are real women, would sacrifice themselves, Syd," she went on to say with her pretty professorial air; "love and revenge. I have gone far enough, as things are, for the one; I don't want to find out by experience how far I could or would go for the other."

"Not to your own ruin, though perhaps to mine," he said, smoothing her hair caressingly. "You might not care about me, but I am sure you would about yourself."

"I think I would sacrifice myself too, if I wanted to punish you," she said in the sweetest way.

And then he laughed and kissed her, and said she was a dear little transparent darling, and good fun to humbug—she believed everything he said to her.

To which Dora, smiling and showing her small white teeth, said—Why, of course she did! What were women for but to believe in and love their husbands?—If—pouting—he humbugged her, that was very wrong, and very wicked of him. She never humbugged him, and she thought he ought to be as loyal to her.

"Well, then, I will!" said Sydney. "So I may not marry Julia Manley?"

"If you do I will kill you and your Julia Manley too!" said Dora, with the most enchanting assumption of viciousness.

He laughed again, and pretended to be afraid of her; and then he vowed he would be a good boy, and so on; with a dozen varieties of falsehood and folly. But when he went away he wondered to himself what Dora really would do if he were to marry Julia Manley; as he must—he knew that well enough. It was horrible, detestable, but he must! She could not betray him, let her threaten as much as she liked. The same reasons which had kept them both from confessing their marriage would keep her quiet when it was broken; and for the far-off future—if the day should ever come when she should be poor and he rich; a not very likely contingency, but if it should come—why then he must trust to the chapter of accidents, and hope for a miracle; as weak men and bad men do.

But what a dear she was!—his fluid thoughts went that way now. How could he ever give her up? What a perplexing pass he was in! What could he do?—how could he save himself from pain and annoyance. How warmly he would have welcomed the Mephistopheles who would have got him safely out of this cleft stick in which he was held, even by the payment of that shadowy thing he called his soul! And

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this thought brought him once more to the remembrance of James Garth and *his* soul; and what a blessed solution of all present difficulties it would be, could that half-mad fellow be induced to break old Hamley's head one of these dark nights, and so end the coil once and for ever! What would become of him, the murderer, afterwards was a thing of no consequence. He was played out; and whether he died in the workhouse or a madhouse, of starvation or on the gallows, his life was done for, and the manner of the end signified but little. How could he tempt him? he thought; how get the idea into his poor feverish head? Probably the old ruffian had left Dora well provided for. If only he could be swept out of existence at this juncture, how smooth the road would be!

Meanwhile Dora, on her side, resolved never again to meet as of old Sydney Lowe, her lawful husband. What he intended to do, she thought, let him, without counsel or consent from her. If she wished to keep him in her power, as she did, he must tie his own nooses and slip his own head into them without help or hindrance so far as she was concerned. Her rôle was innocence coupled with devotion; and she must be careful of both the properties and business belonging to her part. This was her resolve, as she crept back into the house, and locked up the key of the postern gate in her most sacred drawer. The plot was thickening unpleasantly; and she was quite acute enough to know that her safest place was one to the side, whence she could observe but where she was not included.

Chapter XXXV.

ABANDONED TO HERSELF.

Mrs. Hamley was not a woman to do things by halves. What she said she generally meant, and she had not that kind of nature, morally severe and physically tender, which promises hard things and does soft ones. On the contrary, if her words were severe her actions ran them close; so that when she told Patricia she was cast out of her love and abandoned to herself—given her freedom on the one hand, but receiving desolation on the other—she said what her heart dictated; and she acted up to it.

Patricia was in very truth abandoned to herself. She was never scolded, never thwarted, never denied, because absolutely ignored. She came and went, and no notice was taken of her; no one asked where she had been or what she had done. She took her place at the table, and the servants attended on her with the rest; but she was not included in the inner kingdom, and if she made an observation, which was not often, her words fell flat and without response. Had she absented herself, no one would have asked for her until the thing had begun to look serious: and once when she was late for luncheon

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and made her excuse in her old frank, hurried way, her aunt answered coldly: "Pray do not give yourself the trouble to apologise. It really does not signify the least in the world whether you are late or not."

Abandoned to herself; cut off from all family communion; denied even the friendliness of rebuke; it was infinitely worse than being coerced and herded as in the older days; and Aunt Hamley intended that she should feel it worse. To add to Patricia's troubles, there was not only "a cut" between the Abbey Holme people and the Fletchers, owing to their taking Alice Garth without a character—which cut, perhaps, Patricia might have ignored in any circumstances, and more especially in these present ones—but they were away. Had they been at home, poor Garth would not have been ruined. So that she was utterly alone at home and without a friend abroad.

Dora would have been kind to her in secret, and, to do her justice, always tried to put in a conciliatory word for her when she could without hurting herself, and which Mrs. Hamley, even while she rebuked, treasured up as evidence of her favourite's sweet and lovely nature; but Patricia would have none of her. Her heart had turned against the Dora of the actual, and she refused to be caressed back to belief. The Dora she had loved had died, and had left behind her nothing but a memory and a regret. The Dora who remained was a mere show, a mask, an unreality; and she would not join hands again with one who had deceived her as she had done. Her self-respect, too, was outraged at having been made a tool wherewith to work iniquity, and her sense of honour had been revolted. She had touched pitch and she felt defiled. And yet, perhaps, Patricia in future years would develope sufficient passionateness to be able to touch pitch voluntarily in certain circumstances—as the offering of her soul to the good of a cause. But if this might be true of the future, it certainly was not of the present, when the law of girlish righteousness allowed of no deviation from the right line, and when she was both too young and too straightforward for casuistry; and when, take it how she would, supplying Sydney Lowe with money stolen from Mr. Hamley was scarcely reason enough why she should have been dragged into the mire of a crime, innocent of all criminal knowledge though she was. So there she stood amidst the wreck of more than home and fortune, like some worshipper of the old-time gods taken by the initiated into the secret places, and shown the tricks by which the awful holy thunderings were made, and the glorious beauty of the Divine revealed, and the kneeling crowd held captive to the faith it never proved.

Night and day she thought of all this—of the Dora she had loved and believed in, and of the Dora she had found in the place of her ideal; of the good success of baseness; and then of her old life at

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Barsands; till she scarcely knew which was real, the present or the past, and whether her uncle's teaching had been right or her aunt's commentary wrong. Her mental condition was in truth for the moment slightly clouded. Her brain had been overtaxed and was fogged, like an imperfect photographic plate; but she had to fight through it alone. It was a bad pass for a girl given to singleness of mind and purpose and belief; but it had to be gone through; and there was so much good in it that the struggle would make her all the stronger, and she would be a nobler woman at the end of it than she was in the beginning.

The warm spring days were mellowing into summer. There was no earthly reason, thought Patricia, why she should not sit out of doors under the shade of copper beeches and elms and hornbeams, as well as in the heavy rooms of the magnificent mansion. And as no one asked, though Mrs. Hamley always took care to know, where she was, she did sit out of doors the whole day long; which was just the best thing she could have done. Had she exhausted her strength at this time she would probably have fallen ill. All she wanted was quiet and fresh air, and to be left to regain her mental clearness undisturbed by any outside influence whatever.

The poor girl bore herself with signal patience and dignity all this miserable time of undeserved disgrace, and with as signal loyalty. Knowing that her aunt disliked her going about alone, she would not have left the immediate home-grounds under any temptation. She always sat in one place in the shrubbery, out of sight but not lost, and within the range of the meal-time gong. The day when she had been late she had fallen asleep, but she never let herself be overtaken again; and even her aunt, disposed as she was to see her in an unfavourable light in which way soever she was facetted, could not but acknowledge that without the smallest attempt to reinstate herself, she did not take a rebellious advantage of her freedom, but ordered her life with as faithful a regard to rules as if she benefited by their observance.

Mrs. Hamley almost wished she had not been so loyal. It cut the ground of displeasure from under her own feet, and made the girl's conduct about the cheque only the more inexplicable. For who, indeed, could understand such a strange mixture of qualities? she used to say peevishly; so good in some things, so bad in others, and so tiresome in all! Perhaps it was wrong, she would add, to wish that she should be more wicked than she was; but it would be more comfortable and more harmonious. These composite characters were trying to deal with, and gave her a disagreeable sense of unrest.

So she grumbled, as was her wont, and watched with a strange confusion of mind, half anxiously, half fearfully, for signs of greater iniquity or for symptoms of repentant subjection. And when neither

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came she resented her disappointment as an offence. This was one phase of mind; another was a very real unhappiness about the girl's condition—when she did not remember that she was angry. She used to watch her wistfully enough when Patricia was not looking, and ever with a heartache which neither her pride nor her anger would suffer to be seen. She noted how the healthy appetite, which had so much distressed her in the first days by its unlimited appropriation of dry bread, had refined now into a sick indifference to food altogether. She saw how thin she had become, how listless in her movements, how feeble in her gait; how her once responsive face was fixed and rigid, and her once bright eyes veiled and dreamy. She sometimes longed to take her to her bosom, to scold her viciously, then to cry over her and forgive her, and consent to accept the whole affair as a mystery wherein she was not blameworthy. And then she remembered Lord Merrian, and hardened her heart like an English Pharaoh. Besides, Mrs. Hamley's temper could not brook mysteries in the minor world about her. She claimed to be supreme pontiff to whom all things should be known; and if she felt at one moment an impulse of tenderness, she was able to damp it down into manageable displeasure the next, when she put it clearly before her that Patricia had dared to have a secret, and to keep it from her.

In the midst of all this, Patricia's daily dress got shabby; and a letter came from Gordon.

For her own sake, as mistress of Abbey Holme, also for a certain womanliness of feeling still left for the girl amidst all her displeasure, Mrs. Hamley must keep up appearances to high-water mark. She could no more allow her niece to be ill-dressed now, in the days of her dire disgrace, than if she had been foremost in favour. She was spiritually the Cinderella of the family, seated among the ashes, weeping; but her body must be clothed with decorous magnificence, as befitted the mansion in which she had her place.

Wherefore one day at breakfast Aunt Hamley said in a cold voice:

"Patricia, oblige me by not wearing that gown again."

Patricia started, and looked up as if awakened from a dream. It was so strange to be spoken to again! Dora glanced up with a friendly little congratulatory smile which swept from Patricia to Mrs. Hamley, and on to Mrs. Hamley's husband, in an impartial way, excluding none.

"Yes, aunt," Patricia exclaimed.

Mrs. Hamley smiled sarcastically.

"You are ready with your promises," she said. "Pray what will you wear instead?"

"I don't know, aunt," she said. "Have I any other?"

"What a question to ask!" cried her aunt crossly. "A young

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woman of your age not to know what gowns she has to wear! Is it stupidity or affectation, Patricia?"

"Stupidity, I am afraid, aunt," said Patricia quietly.

Mrs. Hamley hesitated for a moment. The girl spoke with such touching simplicity; her sorrowful face, which had lightened up under the address, was so full of ingenuous humility; she looked so glad to be spoken to again, and yet was so little self-assertive, so unaffected, that her aunt did not know whether to call her to her and kiss her and forgive her, or scold her for being so wicked when she was so nice. She was so angry with her for her stupidity—putting herself into this miserable position when she might have made such a brilliant alliance, atoned for her mysterious crime, and done them all so much good! And yet she was so sorry for her!

Her momentary little struggle ended, however, in the maintenance of her old attitude of displeasure, so she only answered, as coldly as she had spoken before:—

"Well, never mind what you have or have not. You will find a new gown in your room to-day; so pray condescend to attend a little to mundane things, Patricia; give the one you are wearing to Bignold to put away, and do not let me have to speak to you about your personal appearance again. You are going about like a cinder-wench!"

"I did not know I was shabby," said Patricia, looking at her dress.

"Then you know it now," snapped her aunt.

"Mrs. Hamley has given you such a pretty dress!" said Dora pleasantly.

"I have done my best for a most ungrateful subject," said Mrs. Hamley with her martyr's air.

"Thank you, aunty, very much," said Patricia, turning a tender face towards her; a moist-eyed face, with the curved lips slightly quivering.

"Thank your uncle whom you have wronged," said Mrs. Hamley, severely.

"Thank you, Mr. Hamley," repeated Patricia.

"Ah!" said that gentleman, plunging and fingering his whiskers, and not sorry to see the bonds relaxed for a moment; for though he, too, was angry at the fault, he was sorry for the person, and would gladly have joined hands over the mystery weeks ago, and have accepted it and reinstated the delinquent; but the Lady was mistress, and he found it best to follow her lead when once within the four walls of Abbey Holme. Still he was pleased at this little break so far. "To return good for evil, eh?—heaping coals of fire? I told you that you were welcome to your diet and your clothes, and I am a man of my word. I don't promise and when the time comes cry off, and don't perform, do I, Lady?"

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"No, Mr. Hamley; you always fulfil your promises," said Mrs. Hamley; "which is more than can be said for every one."

At this moment the butler brought in the letter-bag, which was opened and the letters distributed by Mr. Hamley as usual. Among them came that long-expected, long-desired ship-letter, with its many official notifications, its signs of travel, its promise of abundance.

"For Miss Kemball," said Mr. Hamley, throwing it across the table.

She took it. A mist came before her eyes. She forgot her aunt and her late more mollified mood, Dora's pretty little congratulatory face, Mr. Hamley's ostentatious graciousness; she forgot Abbey Holme and her present misery and all that was her life now—she had Gordon's letter; Gordon was alive; he loved her; he would come back for her some day; he believed in her and would trust her.

She held the letter in her hand, breathless while she looked at it and took in the fact that it was really from him—his handwriting—paper he had touched—words into which he had put his life; unconscious of the cold inquiring eyes that were looking at her, weighing and measuring, judging and condemning. She was called back from her memory of the frank, fair, honest face, the clear voice resonant and yet so tender, the bright blue eyes that had never been ashamed to meet man face to face, and that would not be afraid to meet death and the Eternal—she was called back from her vision of the dear future when he should come and take her hands in his before the whole world, and lead her from darkness to light, from imprisonment to freedom, from degradation and despair to life and love, by her aunt saying in her harshest manner: "When you have quite finished staring at that envelope, Patricia, perhaps you will attend to your uncle saying grace."

They had never had breakfast-grace at Barsands; but they had thanked God more through the day.

Then the vision faded away, and she was once more Patricia the reputed forger, or at least the guilty accomplice; once more a dependent in disgrace; the truth living among lies, which they had had the power to make appear the blackest lie of all.

She stood up with the rest, and walked out of the room with the rest; but though the brief moment of the loosing of the spell had passed, and her aunt had hardened herself against her once more, and she was only Cinderella among her ashes again, she felt as if she had a talisman now which could change all things, and that even Aunt Hamley would have to yield to it.

She went into the garden to her usual seat and read her letter. It was a long, true, and loving one; the second Gordon had written, though the first she had received. It said all that words could say, and expressed more than it said. It spoke of courage, faith,

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constancy, patience, and of the reward which comes to true love in the end. It told her how she was his hope, his dream, his beloved; but it was the letter of a man as well as of a lover, and of a sailor above all; a sailor full of professional ardour and a not ignoble ambition, rejoicing in the life to which he had devoted himself and glorying in his work. It came like one of the old Barsands breezes into the dull and stifling fog of Milltown, and seemed to clear the horizon of her life. It roused her as nothing else could have done, and seemed to give her new energy and to bring her back to herself and the need of action and a purpose. It was like the lifting up of a material veil from her eyes, the taking of a weight from her hands. She belonged not only to herself and to her aunt, but to Gordon. Was she living now as his wife should live? Was this dull and clouded patience under injustice the noblest thing she could do, or was there a better way? Ought she for his sake to remain where she was so misjudged, so hardly punished?—or ought she not rather to withdraw herself from Abbey Holme, and, ever keeping loyal silence, refuse to undergo more humiliation? Patience and humility are grand virtues, truly, sweet and true Christian graces; but the old, heroic, pagan self-respect, which also was integral to Patricia's nature, was a virtue too, and just now was in the ascendant. Hitherto she had proved her patience, now she must justify her self-honour.

It was on the fourth day after she had received this dear letter, and when she had heard Mr. Hamley say how he had met that precious pair of Tom Noddies, the Fletchers, in the market-place that day, that she went to her aunt sitting in the drawing-room as usual, with her many-coloured worsteds in her hands, dear Dora still busy at Venetian point and butterflies for the hair by her own little especial table. It was a sunless, sultry day, but only one window of the room was open about a couple of inches from the top.

"Aunt," said Patricia, coming in and going up to her aunt, very quietly and with the sadness always on her now, but with a strange look of determination in her face and manner; "May I speak to you?"

Her aunt looked up at her curiously.

"Certainly," she answered with a surprised kind of condescension. "What is it you wish to say?"

"I cannot go on living like this," said Patricia with quivering earnestness.

Mrs. Hamley bowed her head.

"And what do you propose to do to alter it?" she asked.

"Let me go away," she cried.

"Willingly. Where?—to do what?"

"Let me earn my own living," said Patricia.

"Willingly, again. But," with Mrs. Hamley's special smile, "to come from heroics and generalities to common-sense details—how do

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you propose to earn your own living? As a governess? What can you teach? For my own sake I cannot allow you to go out as a servant; besides, you cannot wait at table, and I could scarcely recommend your honesty," she said cruelly; "and ability to steer a yacht on to the rocks, or even to ride barebacked, will not, I fear, get you a living. This last might, indeed, do for the circus; but I see no other opening. I am willing to discuss any scheme with you, but it must be a rational one."

All this was cruelly said; with intentional harshness and insolence. Patricia turned pale and her hands clasped each other with a nervous pressure. She held her breath for a moment; and then, as if she had cast her anger from her as a meaner thing, raised her eyes, and said with a sweet and touching dignity, a noble patience that was the maturer fruit of her former girlish cheerfulness; "I know that I am very ignorant, but I would indeed rather go out as a servant, earning my own bread by my own labour, than live like this."

"Are you so very cruelly treated here?" returned Mrs. Hamley, as if asking an honest question. "Who offends you? Dora, do you do anything to offend Patricia?" Dora shook her head. "If you have any complaint to make, Patricia, pray make it. It seems to me that you are left very much to yourself, and have no cause to grumble. I do not interfere with you. To be sure, I would not like you to disgrace the house by any wild or wicked ways; but, failing this, I really do not see how you are coerced or what cause you have to complain."

"Ah, aunt, you do not speak as you feel—as you know," said Patricia.

"Thank you, Patricia. At my age it is not quite usual to be told one tells falsehoods." Mrs. Hamley said this with ominous quietness. It was merely an argument she was holding, not an offence she was resenting.

"I did not mean that exactly," returned Patricia; "but you want to try me. You will not come to my point, and when people do that——"

"They do tell falsehoods?" she said.

"In a way, yes," answered Patricia bravely.

Her aunt smiled disagreeably.

"Are you adopting exactly the right method to make things better for yourself?" she asked. "Shall we, for your sake, and before you commit yourself farther, go back to the starting-point? What do you purpose to do if you leave Abbey Holme?"

"I see nothing now," she said with a candid throwing up of her cards. After a pause, she added, in a pleading voice—"Aunt, will you let me go to the Fletchers for a little while? I know they are at home, and I am sure they would take me."

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"As a dependant?—if you please. Why not? It will be simply a change of place, not circumstances," said Mrs. Hamley quietly.

"Aunt, don't!" cried Patricia in a kind of agony. "Well!" she then said, pressing her hands over her eyes, "let me go. Miss Fletcher will understand me and believe me."

Dora flushed a little, and glanced upward. She was very sorry for the necessity, but she did not exactly want Patricia to be understood. Mrs. Hamley flushed too.

"I know you love Miss Fletcher better far than you have ever loved me," she began in a level tone that soon rose to the graver accent of displeasure, and that finally deepened into anger. "Go to her if you wish it. I should be sorry to keep you. Carry your false tales out of the house, and make out that you have been ill-treated when you have only been too kindly considered. Ungrateful, disobedient, untrustworthy girl, you leave me as you came to me, a creature I have been utterly unable to improve, and, with all my kindness, as utterly unable to make love me. Not another word. Leave me, I say. If the Fletchers, or any one else, will keep you till you are of age, when I can wash my hands of you for ever, I shall thank them. Go! *Will* you go, Patricia? I want never to see you again!"

"Will you not say good-bye, aunt?" said Patricia, standing before her, holding out her hands. "I did not mean to vex you. I do not like to part in anger."

"No, I will not say good-bye," answered Aunt Hamley. "The word means a blessing. I cannot bless you. Go!"

"Aunt!"

The depth of anguish in the girl's voice made Mrs. Hamley's every nerve quiver; but she was not minded to yield to her weakness. She looked resolutely away from the pleading face, the beseeching figure, the imploring gesture.

"Not another word. Go!" she said again.

Patricia turned her eyes on Dora. Dora was crying, with a slightly scared look on her flushed face;—sincerely sorry for poor Patricia; sorry too, for Mrs. Hamley who wounded herself as much as she hurt her niece; hating herself and Sydney and all that had led to this miserable complication—nevertheless keeping silence.

"Good-bye, Dora," then said Patricia. "Make my aunt forgive me," she added, as with a stifled sob she left the room.

The innocent scapegoat on whom was laid the burden of many sins, if ever she needed faith of the best kind it was now!

That day Patricia was driven down to the Fletchers' with her boxes. Bignold had had orders to pack up everything belonging to Miss Kemball, and the coachman took her, wondering, to the Hollies. It was very like a dismissal, he thought; more especially when he saw by the maid's astonishment that the young lady was not expected.

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"A rumpus, I make it out," he said to Mary Anne confidentially; and Mary Anne thought he was about right.

"My child!" cried Catherine Fletcher, as Patricia came into the room, the shadow of her former self; thin to as much gauntness as a young girl can have; depressed, strange, subdued; all her brightness dulled; her former abounding vitality gone; the whole being and manner of the brave and cheerful Barsands nymph changed as if she had been transformed—changed as a green wood is changed when a fire or a storm has swept through it. "Good heavens! what has happened?" she cried in real alarm.

"Oh! Miss Fletcher, do not think me mad, but do take me for awhile! Let this be my home; I have none other!" cried Patricia, flinging herself into her arms. "You are my only friends. Keep me just a little while till I can keep myself."

"Child—my dear, dear girl! what is all this about?" cried Dr. Fletcher, coming to her.

She held out her hands.

"Will you take me, Dr. Fletcher?" she cried prayerfully. "Just for a little while, till I get strong and can see my way?"

His face changed.

"For life, if you will, Patricia," he answered, holding her hands in his. "Don't say, 'only for a little while.'"

"Oh, how kind you are," Patricia said, looking into his face; "but don't be too kind to me just now—I don't want to cry."

"I should not like to see you do anything weak or silly," said Miss Fletcher gravely; "so don't cry, but tell us what it all means."

"It means that I am in utter disgrace at Abbey Holme, and that my life is too intolerable there. I cannot go on as I am," said Patricia; "so I asked aunt if I might come here. I felt sure you would take me for a few days; and she was angry, and sent me with all my things, as if to live here. This was her punishment to me because I asked."

"She was quite right," said Catherine Fletcher kindly. "She never did a better nor a wiser thing. She knew that she could not have made me a more delightful present if she had given me half her wealth."

"Quite right," repeated Dr. Fletcher. "I scarcely gave the old lady credit for such perspicacity. So now, missy, you are at home, remember—at home for life, if you will."

"But now you must hear my story before you take me," said Patricia with her eager candour. "I do not think you will disbelieve me, but it is just possible you may, and I should like you to know what has happened."

"Will it take long? Shall I keep the carriage with the boxes at the door till you have made your confession? or shall I walk by faith

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and have them carried into the blue bedroom?" asked Miss Fletcher pleasantly.

"You had better keep them till you have heard," was the grave answer.

"As if my Patricia could do anything worthy of condemnation!" said Catherine Fletcher, putting her comfortable arm round the girl's neck and looking into her face lovingly.

Patricia caught her hand, and kept it there on her shoulder.

"You believe me, then? you will believe me, however much appearances are against me?"

"If you say that you are innocent—yes," answered Catherine emphatically.

"And you too?" Patricia turned to Dr. Fletcher.

"I? I would not believe that you could do anything wrong if you tried," he said. "And if you were even to confess to a grave misdemeanour, I think I should have recourse to a blister on your head and a dose of blue pill. I would rather accept the theory of temporary monomania than that of intentional immorality."

She drew a long breath.

"That is comforting," she said. "It seems to heal me somehow."

Then with her hands clasped over her friend's, but every now and then turning her eyes to that friend's brother, she made her simple statement—how that she had been asked to change a cheque at the bank and to say nothing about it; how that she had done so, and had agreed to say nothing about it; how that cheque had turned out to be a forgery, for which she was held responsible because of her silence.

"But," she said with a kindling face, "as I promised faithfully not to tell, I must keep my word, whatever it costs me. I know nothing about it in any way. I simply did what I was asked to do, and I had not the faintest idea there was any wrong connected with it.

"And the person who asked you knows all that has happened since?" asked Dr. Fletcher.

"Yes," answered Patricia.

"And has made no sign?"

"No," she said; "but," nervously, "please do not ask me any questions. I want to say nothing, because I might say too much if I did. I must be true to my word."

"So you shall be, dear," said Miss Fletcher, kissing her. "We will never question you. We both believe in you implicitly, don't we, Henry? and can see how it all happened as clearly as if we had been there. So now go up-stairs and take off your things. At last I have a daughter of my own!"

"A friend to share our home, to make it bright for us, and to make her own happiness in it," said Dr. Fletcher hurriedly.

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"It is so strange to hear myself loved again. I scarcely know if it is pain or pleasure. It feels almost too strong for me," Patricia murmured rather than spoke, pushing up her hair dreamily.

Brother and sister exchanged looks.

"Come, dear," said Catherine Fletcher briskly, "we don't dream at the Hollies. We must have the boxes seen to, and your things put away, child; and, now I remember, there are three or four gowns and things of mine hanging up in your wardrobe. What an intrusion! Come, let us make haste and get all in order before dinner-time."

Her voice and manner roused the girl pleasantly. With a little laugh that had just the beginning of a natural joyousness in it, she left the room with her friend, and in less than an hour was unpacked and homed, with a delicious sentiment of rest and peace stealing like sleep over her.

When they were alone together, Catherine asked her brother, "What do you think of all this, Henry?"

"I think it is evident, Miss Drummond," he answered.

"So I think; but what does it all mean? There is a mystery beyond. What can it be?"

"That is just the difficulty," he said; "but the person for whom Patricia acted was evidently 'dear Dora,' as Mrs. Hamley calls her."

"Yes; evidently; I always felt she was underhand."

"Tyranny. Tyrants make slaves, and all slaves are false," was his answer.

"But how cruelly they seem to have treated this poor child. How changed she is!"

Dr. Fletcher's quiet brown eyes glanced with an angry vivacity—rare in him.

"Cruelly! They have tried to kill her, body and soul!" he cried. "As if cruelty is only physical! Why, this girl has been assassinated—murdered! All that was best and most beautiful in her they have tried to crush out, because it did not square with their wretched, shallow lives! Had she died under their hands it would have been substantially murder—if not legally so."

He spoke with a vehemence his sister never remembered to have noted in him before. She looked at him anxiously; then rubbed her eyes with her forefingers, which was a trick of hers when she was puzzled. Just now Henry puzzled her immensely; and the key to the riddle was wanting.

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Chapter XXXVI.

DISILLUSIONED.

No other arrangement could have helped Patricia at this moment so well as this of making her home with the Fletchers. Not even the return of Gordon and the fulness of her love with him would have done her so much good—taking the phrase in its highest sense. Had he come back and married her off hand, as he would have done, she would have been intensely happy, of course; and happiness with some natures is a fine soil for the growth of the lovelier virtues; but she would not have learnt all she was learning now, and she would, therefore, have lost the spiritual richness given by the sympathy which comes of knowledge.

She was eminently purposeful in character, and she was leading now a purposeful life; and one different in kind from anything she had known before. As her uncle's housekeeper and companion at Barsands, she had had her work and her uses, in a small sphere, but wholesome so far as it went; but here and now her horizon was enlarged, and her mind gained in proportion. She was Doctor Fletcher's pupil indoors, and Catherine's companion abroad. By the one, her intellect was trained with more mastership than it had ever been trained before; and the other took her among her old friends, the poor, where she must perforce pity, and was able to help. Her life was passed out of herself as it used to be at Barsands, but on a higher platform; and the more it was dedicated to the service of others, the more her own sorrows and perplexities fell into the background and became of less magnitude and importance. She went among the poor and heard the sorrowful stories of their lives; she saw their hard struggles with misery, disease, and debt; and she watched their pathetic patience under their afflictions. Sometimes it was their brutish patience, the submission of "dumb driven cattle," too spiritless to wish for better things, too degraded to strive for them; and sometimes it was the recklessness which grows on that sandy soil where there is no hope—the scamped work, the filched time, the husbands who left their wives to starve, and cared neither for home nor duty so long as they could drink away their ill-earned wages; the wives that were slatternly shrews, who drank too, and cast to the winds every womanly virtue and every lesson of decent living; the mothers whose children were unwelcome enemies, fetters and hindrances in the great battle of life, so many extra mouths to feed out of the common stock, which they wished the fever or the frosts would take away, and which were taken away with at least the help of neglect if of nothing more active; men and women whom poverty, ignorance, and the terrible conflict in which they found themselves

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worsted on all sides, oppressed by man, forgotten by God, had reduced to the level of savages, and some to the level of beasts—all this she saw with a burning heart; her inherent desire to be of use breaking out with tenfold force as she came to a more accurate knowledge of the work that had to be done. And she was of use, and never weary. Like Catherine herself, she gave up herself to the service of humanity and to the alleviation of suffering. Her life was passed among the poor, with no superior patronage demanding gratitude and submission, no fine lady daintiness playing at benevolence for a country pastime that went no deeper than croquet or a new costume; but as a sister, a child, more richly endowed than themselves, and sharing her treasures with those who had none. Reading to the sick and to the old; taking girlish gifts of use, or prettiness, or pleasure only, to the children; adding the grace and brightness of her youth to the motherly prevision of Miss Fletcher; comforting those in sorrow; helping those in need; speaking good words of human fellowship to those who had hitherto so sorely failed—digging down into these arid souls for the sweet waters of conscience and self-respect, and seldom digging in vain—this was her work now done hand in hand with her older friend. And it made a beautiful life for her; a life full of blessing given and received; a life wherein she grew into a loveliness of soul and body surpassing all she had yet attained; a life which gave back the nobleness it wrought and the happiness it dispensed, such as is ever found, no matter what the pattern of their flag, by those who have thus consecrated themselves to this service of humanity.

In the beautiful activities of the present she wondered more than ever at the purposeless existence of Abbey Holme; its ladylike excuses for idleness in those eternal strips of needlework and endless rolls of parti-coloured knitting which filled up the hours for her aunt and Dora with such a comfortable conviction of industry; its want of depth at home or of interest abroad; its absence of all object or intention save the maintenance of the proprieties and the smoothest manner of passing time. She wondered just as much now at their material arrangements too, as she did in the beginning; and still more at herself, that she had lived through them for those long weary months. How stifling it was! Those dreadful flues which went through the house and made it all as hot as a greenhouse; those thick velvet-pile carpets and heavy curtains and closed windows and huge fires; those dull evenings when she was expected to interest herself in bezique which she could never understand, and was not allowed to read or employ her hands in such work only as she could do—and it was not fine work; those dull days; those languid, compressed, silent weeks and months! She felt she could not have lived there at all had it not been for Dora; and how kind Dora was

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in the beginning! Kind, yes, always; at the end quite as kind as in the beginning; even when she had ruined her, doing her best to make her pain less painful! But how all that sweetness of manner had vanished into a mere bubble of no meaning, as she found out the unworthiness underlying the real nature! It seemed to her, looking back and reflecting, that Dora would have been less unworthy had she been less amiable; for to Patricia, as well as to Mrs. Hamley, stratified characters, part noble, part base, were distressing, and she thought that a bad person had better be bad all through than only in bits; souls that are like Dead Sea apples being apt to mislead the innocent to fatal issues.

Ah! it was a dreadful time and place to remember!—like gazing back into a prison, where "an angel beautiful and bright" had come down and looked her in the face, like that angel who bewildered the poor knight of whom Dr. Fletcher read to her the sweet sad story the other night; an angel who had made the gloom shine like sunlight while she stayed, but who had vanished one day, making the worst darkness of all! Sometimes a horrible dread used to come over her that perhaps her aunt would fall into a softer mood towards her, and send for her again to tell her she was forgiven, and that she was to be a better girl for the future, and copy Dora with more zealous exactness, and be sure not to tell any more stories, or have to do with forgery or shameful secrets. She used to wake at night in terror, dreaming that this had happened, and that she was being dragged back to the Abbey Holme drawing-room where she could not find the door and where the windows were all closed. It was a dream that always shook her nerves for days after, and that made both Dr. Fletcher and Catherine intensely anxious when it came, for it was a sign that had a bad meaning. Patricia, however, could not get rid of the thought: it tormented her, waking as well as sleeping. She used to ask herself what she should do if this chance came about; and sometimes she used to ask the Fletchers, with a clinging kind of mental terror that distressed them even more than did her dream. When she did, Catherine, to cover her deeper feeling, would laugh and promise to hide her somewhere among the rocks like an old-world fugitive; but the feeding would be difficult, she used to say; and once Dr. Fletcher, not looking up, said in a constrained manner: "It will be your own fault if you go; you have a home here for life, if you wish it."

There did not seem to be much chance however of this recall. As things stood, Mrs. Hamley refused to see either the Fletchers or Patricia. She held the one as a criminal, and the others as her aiders and abettors; and, as she said in her note to Patricia, wherein she declined a visit her niece had proffered, she had always made it a rule in life to give up the acquaintance of people who did wrong.

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She did not understand else what difference those who honoured the Ten Commandments could make between vice and virtue; and as she considered that Patricia had sinned heinously, she necessarily held that Doctor and Miss Fletcher had made themselves parties to her offence by taking her as they had done from under her protection, undoing all the good she had been at such pains to effect, and defying her right of anger and punishment.

So the breach was very wide and very pronounced between the Hollies and Abbey Holme, and Milltown had a comfortable little dish of gossip to discuss, wherein not one of the guesses was true, and not an arrow hit the right mark. Enough was known, however, for abundant speculation; and the Milltown people did not neglect their opportunities.

Chief of the humble friends to whom Catherine and Patricia went with their kind acts and heartsome words, was poor Mrs. Garth, doing her brave battle with misfortune single-handed, and bearing her husband's collapse as well as their joint sorrow with a steadfast courage that was as sublime in its own way as any of those deeds of heroism which have stirred the world's imagination for all time and changed the current of history. Ah, how many of these poor hard-handed, rough-speeched brothers and sisters of ours, whom now we despise as "the common people" just admitted into the outer courts of humanity, will be shining angels in the days to come; while we who wear soft clothing and walk delicately, will be turned down in the ranks and set to learn some elementary lessons of virtue far beneath their feet! Between the Hamleys and the Garths of society lie more gulfs than one; and the "wisdom which is conversant with God" does not always dwell with the former.

Yet how brave soever Mrs. Garth was, her path was very rough; and she felt it to be so. There was no lack of immediate means; but the future—that terrible future—troubled her greatly; and not without reason—it was all so utterly dark! Time seemed to work but little good for James. He was still as broken-spirited as ever; though to be sure he had twice done a day's work for Dr. Fletcher, and it seemed to have heartened him and brought back a flash of his old cheery manhood while the impulse to be doing lasted. The worst of it was, it lasted for so short a time; and then he sank back into the wandering idleness of his former state, haunting the lanes that looked on to Long Field Farm, and breaking his heart at every change being wrought in field or fence. If he had lost his land fairly, perhaps he would have been as brave in his sorrow as his wife; but it was the sense of having been tricked, and tricked by Mr. Hamley above all men, that was the poison in the wound and hindered it from healing. It was madness, granted; but it was pitiable all the same.

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One day Patricia was out for a walk by herself. The Fletchers were calling at the Quest, and she was to be picked up on their way home. She had never told them why she did not care to go to the grand house, but they could imagine plenty of reasons, if none of them the true one; and she was therefore left behind as a matter of course, without questions or explanations. She went up by the farm on her way to meet them, taking the lane where she and Dora had walked that botanizing day when they had met Lord Merrian, and Mrs. Garth, as the farmyard Constance, had broken the conventional canon of fitness by railing in Doric against a rich man's injustice.

What a lifetime had passed between this and then! She felt as far removed from the perplexed and entangled self of that day as she had felt removed then from the joyous Barsands Patricia, who had never known a heartache and never a tear, till that last sad hour when all had gone to wreck together. How changed the whole aspect of life was now from what it had been both then and in the old, old days of the dear home! Little introspective as she was, her heart was perforce turned back on itself to-day, and she could not choose but look within, asking herself how things were with her and noting where they differed from the past. The answer was well. She was happier now than she had been, in spite of that terrible shadow under which she lived; but how much graver, how much less joyous! how the scales of girlish blindness and unconscious romance had fallen for ever from her eyes, and what terrible truths had been revealed to her!

Then she thought of Lord Merrian, and his strange love for her. What was there in her, a simple country girl without family or fortune, to attract a man in his position? Why, nothing! It was just a day-dream to him—no more; his reason had gone to sleep, and he had wandered in his dream. She remembered, with a blush, that one rapid thought which had come like a vision of temptation, of the good she could do the world through him, and the power she would have had. And then she looked up as if some one had been walking with her to whom she was speaking aloud, as she thought, "But I have found that I can do good as I am: that we all can if we like; and that I need not be Lord Merrian's wife to make a few hearts lighter and a few lives better."

The root of this thought was a miserable young couple fast going to ruin, whom Catherine and she had visited much and taken in hand to teach and improve, and whom they had both taught and improved. The chief evil had been the young wife's incapacity and the young husband's impatience; but a well-ordered home, the means whereof had been partly taught and partly given, had closed the gin-shop door and made a worthy household out of a pauperised and vicious hovel. This was just one of the instances of remediable igno-

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rance of which they so often spoke at the Hollies, where it was held as a cardinal article of faith that human lives can be redeemed if only there is energy and love enough to do it.

And while she was thinking thus she came upon the gate where James Garth usually took his mournful station, and found him standing there in the old attitude, his chin resting on his hands, staring down on the fields that had been his father's, but would never be his son's. He was so wrapped up in his own thoughts, that he neither saw nor heard her, though she said "Good-day, Mr. Garth," cheerily.

Had he still been the proprietor of Long Field Farm, she might have called him Garth, simply. As a ruined man she was careful to give the little note of respect.

As he did not hear he did not answer her; and then she drew down into the gateway and touched his arm. He started and muttered a savage oath; but when he saw who it was, he dropped his eyes, and touching his battered cap, said mildly enough:

"Beg pardon, miss, I did not know it was you."

"I thought you were coming to the Hollies again to finish that bit of garden you left half done," said Patricia, not as an opening by way of improving the occasion, but simply because she thought he had been coming; and she wanted to see the bit which the Fletchers had taken in from the field finished and made into the rose-garden they said should be called after her—"Patricia's portion."

"I have no heart for work!" said Garth more sadly then sullenly, turning away.

"Oh! don't say that!" she cried with a kind of grieved surprise in her voice; "what is life good for if we do not work?"

"Life is good for nothing now to me," he answered.

"I cannot bear to hear you say so; is that like a man?" she said very earnestly, leaning forward and looking into his face. "Why, Mr. Garth, I should have thought you would have had more courage than this!"

"It has taken the heart out of me," he said; and put his head down into his hands with the old despairing gesture.

"But surely the very good of trial is to prove our strength!" Patricia answered. "What would become of the world if we all gave way like cowards as soon as things went wrong? And we can be cowardly in mind as well as in body."

"I am no coward, miss!" said Garth, lifting up his angry face.

The word caught and stung him, not unwholesomely.

"No, I dare say you are not, I should not think you were," Patricia answered; "at least not in the usual way. But whatever you may be in one way, you cannot say that this kind of thing is either brave or manly! It does no good. It will not give you back your farm—

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and even if it would, all this gloomy despair would not be a worthy kind of purchase-money; as it is, it only makes you more miserable than you need be, and adds to your poor wife's troubles."

"It is well for a young lady like you to talk," said James Garth with some scorn. "A soft young lady, as has never known a cross nor a strain, how can you judge for a man like myself with such a sorrow as I have on me?"

"Have I known no sorrows?" answered Patricia in a low voice. "I think I have; and very bitter ones too! I have lost all that you have, Mr. Garth—my old home where I was brought up, and where I was so happy; my uncle, who was like my father, and that I loved like my father; my only friend; and—more;" she added with a flushing face: "more than I can tell you. And I too, nearly broke down as you have done, but"— with the old Joan of Arc look in her bright young eyes lifted up so straight and earnest into the sullen face beside her, "I made a better fight of it than you have! I am only a girl and you are a man—a man with a wife and children depending on you—but I would have cut off my right hand before I would have wasted my time and strength and neglected every duty as you have done, just to give way to all this useless regret! It is unworthy of you; and however angry you may be to hear me say so, I feel as if I must!"

"You are a bold speaker, miss," said Garth with a dark look.

Once the sunny temper of him would have been no more ruffled by a woman's words than his flesh would have been hurt by a child's blow; but he was easily made angry now—and for the moment looked, as he felt, like a murderer.

Patricia shrank back at his eyes; then she seemed to nerve herself, and held out her hand.

"Forgive me if I have spoken too roughly," she said with a noble self-surrender, as if she had been speaking to a king. "But I am so sorry to see you so broken—I do so long to know that you have taken your griefs into your own hands, and conquered them as a brave man should, that perhaps I have said too much! You are doing yourself so much harm too, in every way, and making us all so unhappy! I want you to forgive me now if I have hurt you, but to try and be braver than you have been, all the same. You *must* come out of this trouble, Mr. Garth!—you must be a man and conquer it!"

She spoke passionately, with a pleading look and manner that could not fail to touch any one not a madman nor a savage. It is the power that truth and love possess; the faith which at times removes more than the material mountain.

There was silence for some moments, he looking down, she looking at him.

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"Perhaps you mean well, miss," he then said with a deep sigh, and turned away his head.

Whether he would or no he was touched; but he did not want to yield to her. He had not taken her proffered hand when she held it out to him, now she put it into his, and clasped her fingers over the rough brown skin.

"I do mean it well," she said with a fervent ring in her voice. "Show me that you believe I do, and that you are not angry at my speaking so plainly—for after all you are so much older than I—by coming to-morrow to the Hollies. If you would only take up work again, Mr. Garth, you would conquer everything—live it all down!"

"Wages for working on another man's property are not pleasant to a man who has been his own master, and held his own land all his life, and his father's before him," said Garth.

"But if you have not got your land any longer, wages are better than nothing, and work on any man's property is better than no work at all," said Patricia with a deeper wisdom than perhaps she knew. "Do come to the Hollies, Mr. Garth! you know that Doctor and Miss Fletcher are as much interested in you as if you were their brother. I cannot tell how you have distressed them by the way in which you have borne your trouble, so unlike what might have been expected from you!"

She was still speaking with the same passion of earnestness; pleading with the man's better self and judgment against his lower state; her hand in his; her fingers pressed close in her zeal. She looked like some girl-saint preaching the truth to unconverted ears, calling the darker soul into the higher life. As indeed she was; and as James Garth felt her to be.

Her courage and enthusiasm touch the dying spark of manhood in him; her woman's zeal woke up his pride; her frank friendliness lifted him back to his old state of self-respect, and seemed to heal the wound in his sore soul; the warm, girlish grasp did him good, as he told his wife; and looking at her with his hollow eyes kindly, a smile came over his gaunt face, and he said, shaking her hand:

"I'll come to-morrow, miss. I'd scarce be a man if I could refuse a young lady like you who speaks so well!"

And as they stood there, with the warmth of the moment on them both—she to save and he to yield—the clatter of horses' feet came near and Lord Merrian, riding with a fair pretty girl, passed them at a slow pace and took in the whole scene.

They had never met since that last interview in the drawing-room at Abbey Holme; and when they did meet now all things were changed. Patricia was no longer the possible co-heiress with Dora Drummond; no longer Mrs. Hamley's beautiful niece who was worth even a young lord's looking after; but a discarded relative, evidently

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living in disgrace and as evidently having done something to deserve it. And Lord Merrian was no longer the enthusiastic Numa worshipping his hidden Egeria, but the wise and far-seeing young statesman, who had just ideas on the value of matrimonial alliances, and who had come to the rather tardy possession of his senses and the knowledge that a Lady Maud, born in the purple and educated in the shibboleth of the aristocracy from the beginning, would make a fitter wife for him than even a Joan of Arc who was a heretic to the inner creed, and not quite up in the accidence of the outer observances.

Lady Maud was a good, well-behaved, placid young person, untroubled by doubt social or religious, and who would have condemned an original thought, either in herself or any other woman, as dangerous and unladylike. She was one of those who accept the present arrangements of society as final, and who cannot understand what people find to perplex and discompose them. There are the Queen and royal family; the aristocracy; the two sections of the middle classes, both the moneyed who may be known and the professional and poor who may not; and then there are the common people who have to work for all these grander creatures, and who are not of the same human nature somehow, neither living nor suffering nor yet feeling as the high people, and who are so horribly vulgar and dirty! And then there is the Christian religion, which is the only religion in the world; all the rest being shocking idolatries destitute of the first principles of morality; and the English Church, which is the only true centre of Christianity, every other embodiment being so absurd that the wonder is how people can be found to believe them; and what can folks find in all this to make them unhappy or discontented? Things are as they were ordered from the beginning; the England and English society of this our nineteenth century being the very perfection of God's counsels; and people are very wicked who try to change the established order. To be sure a few Acts of Parliament may be passed that just touch an unimportant law, but nothing more. As for these dreadful doctrines of liberty and all that, Lady Maud thought they ought to be put a stop to and done something with. She believed they were all murderers in heart who held them; and could not understand any woman, still less a lady, with such awful opinions. Nevertheless, Philistine as she was, she was a good little girl who would make a faithful wife and a tolerably efficient mother; who would give recherché dinners to ambassadors and royal princes, and would regulate her household with discretion. She had a fair understanding, and was by no means dull to talk to if you kept in the shallows; but she was lost on all subjects wanting thought, being utterly devoid of philosophic instincts, and never seeing the cause or the outfall of any emotion whatsoever. She was immensely popular in society, being pretty, accomplished, amiable, and with perfect manners; and when

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she caught Lord Merrian's heart at the rebound, and made it her own, the world congratulated him on his good luck and told him he had chosen the very girl made for him. So they were engaged with much rejoicing on all sides, and the young lord himself felt that he had chosen the better part.

As they rode along the lane, however, his head would run on Patricia to-day. She seemed very near to him, with a strange surge of memory that distressed him; for he was honest-hearted, and did not want to have his allegiance to the lady of his choice disturbed even by a memory. He was quite content with his pretty fiancée and had no wish to look up into heights impossible for her to reach. Still, his Egeria had been very dear to him! She had been like his good angel—the voice which had called to him from above, and to which he had replied Excelsior—before he failed and fell.

He was a little silent as they rode between the leafy hedges. His imagination, always his strongest or his weakest point, had invested Patricia with even more than her rightful share of charm and beauty; and just now she seemed to come before his eyes like some glorified creature, half-angelic, half-heroic, who would have compelled crowds to kneel to her had she appeared and spoken.

Then they passed the Long Field gate, and he saw a tall, rather badly-dressed girl, with her hat pushed unbecomingly off her face, standing holding a peasant's hand in hers and speaking to him as equals together; speaking to him with the same love, the same passion, the same fervour as she used to show when speaking to him, Lord Merrian, a gentleman and the son of a peer.

He took off his hat as he passed, and Patricia bowed too; but the spell was broken. Henceforth Lady Maud had no need to fear the past. There would be no rival in his memory to dwarf her mental stature and pale her spiritual charms. He acknowledged his folly and the blindness of his fascination. That kind of thing would never have done! It is all very well to talk of brotherhood and equality and helping on humanity and all that: it is a beautiful theory, and one that warms one's heart when speaking of it. But when you come to its practical confession, standing thus shaking hands with a dirty, unwashed, unshaven peasant—Lord Merrian's blue blood asserted itself then with an indignant throb; and Patricia fell for ever from her pedestal. She was simply a handsome girl with rather low tastes and an inferior kind of manner; and he wondered, like a child suddenly conscious that its coveted plaything was a snake and would have stung him, what they should all have done had she taken him at his word, and become Lady Merrian and his mother's daughter-in-law. What a mercy she did not! And as he thought this he looked at Lady Maud with as much gratitude as love, and closed the Kemball episode for ever.

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Soon after this the Fletchers drove up, and Patricia got into the carriage with them; but not before she had made Garth promise again that he would come to-morrow to finish his work in the garden, and not before she had poured still a little more life and courage into the poor fellow's sunken heart.

"What an extraordinary thing—that girl to whom you bowed, shaking hands with that common man!" said Lady Maud after a long pause.

Lord Merrian looked innocent.

"That is Miss Kemball," he said; "niece of the people who live there," pointing with his whip to Abbey Holme. "She is an enthusiast, and goes in for communism and all that."

"And you know her!" Lady Maud's face had just a shade of possible displeasure athwart its surprise. "She is not quite in your style I should think," with a nervous little laugh.

"No, she is not; but of course I know her slightly," was his answer, made with a reassuring indifference and a wise suppression of the identity of Egeria.

"I cannot bear to see women go out of their sphere in this manner," said Lady Maud. "I think all these theories and extravagance perfectly awful. The idea of any one holding the position of a lady being so familiar as that with a common man! I wonder how she could!"

"Yes, it is odd to what lengths enthusiasm will carry people," said Lord Merrian simply; and turned the conversation by a masterstroke.

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Certain Aspects of French Politics.

We cannot agree with those who profess to see no difference in the aspect of Paris, or rather of the Parisians, from that which they bore previous to 1870. We are not disposed to pay more attention to this than it legitimately warrants. The appearance of the invalid is not everything; yet who will question that the doctor frequently gets his best hints as to what mode of treatment to pursue by watching his patient's physiognomy?

You see more sad than cheerful countenances as you walk through the streets, and more half-vacant half-scared faces than either. And if you go where people are supposed to be lively, to the public gardens, to the theatre, you are disagreeably reminded of Mr. Dickens' Little Marchioness, and of her "great deal of make-believe." It is not so much that the people do not, after a fashion, enjoy themselves: it is that you are somehow made aware that this passing enjoyment is a sort of unreal thing, put on with the new necktie or pair of gloves, just for the occasion. Yet it seems certain that the French people have not only borne the afflictions of 1870–71 far better than might have been expected, but also that they have felt them less acutely. This is partly true with regard to the German war, and very much more true in respect to the civil war which followed it. In some measure it would be well if it were not so. It is impossible for Frenchmen to realise that every one among them was compromised in the folly and guilt which led up to the war with Prussia, and entailed its disastrous issue. "The wish is father to the thought," and this blindness is undoubtedly pleasant to them; but various circumstances aided them very substantially in thus throwing dust in their own eyes. First of all must be accounted the *déchéance* of the Third Napoleon: an act which would have been a very worthy one indeed had it taken place before the war broke out, but which was quite stripped of its heroic vesture by the manner in which it was accomplished. We are not going to question the propriety or, at any rate, the inevitableness, of its taking place as it did; all we say is, that the thing had better have been done quietly and without so much trumpeting; and it had been better to veil a little the exuberance of joy at the national disgrace of Sedan, which rendered it so extremely easy to proclaim the Republic at the Hôtel de Ville. It was not likely to improve the relations between the army and the people for the former to hear and know that the latter positively rejoiced over

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the defeat and captivity of all that was reckoned most valorous in France. It cut the breach between the two wider than it had ever been before; and the massacres which succeeded the fall of the Commune were, it is certain, not a little provoked by the remembrance of the state of public feeling which followed the battle of Sedan. And this leads us to consider one of the most ominous signs of the times in France—that the country is politically made up of irreconcilable contrasts. In no country can any amount of political security or stability exist in which the army and the people represent two different and opposing principles. France, in this, stands forth as a fatal exception among the nations; for where else can we conceive it possible that the people of the capital, and the nation in their wake, should take pleasure in the rout of their finest troops? And it would be futile to aver that it was only the capture of Louis Napoleon that made glad the hearts of the great mass of his opponents; much more was it the comfortable conviction, that since one of the Imperial armies was marched off to Germany and the other shut up in Metz, there could be no danger or inconvenience in putting their cherished dreams into practice.

Now, we say that no considerations whatever can justify such feelings as these: they are the apotheosis of the politician at the expense of the patriot. They were utterly inexcusable; even if we recollect how much the Emperor Napoleon had done to foster their growth. This entire alienation of the army from the people was one of the worst heritages his reign left to the nation he governed for some twenty years, and one of the gravest indictments against his character as a ruler that history will have to record. Frenchmen could never forget, and do not forget to this hour, that it was the cannon of December which put Louis Napoleon upon the Imperial throne: not all the (more or less national) foreign wars he embarked in, mainly in the hopes of effacing this fact from their minds, succeeded in their purpose. What they do not remember near so clearly, unfortunately, is their own reckless infatuation, which placed a Bonaparte in the President's chair, and their own pusillanimous sycophancy, which induced them to be no unwilling accomplices in keeping him upon the throne he had usurped, so long as the sun seemed to shine upon his undertakings.

We have seen that the French regarded the earlier phases of the German war with, to say the least, mixed feelings. Their later reverses they partially explained away, by repeating to themselves—what, by-the-bye, is becoming rather too general an opinion *outside* France—that the Germans are invincible, and that no other armies, however good, could compete with theirs; and partly by the hypothesis of treason. But there can be no doubt that they took the disasters of the Commune still less to heart. Instead of confessing,

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in sorrow and indignation, that it was nothing but the poltroonery of the "party of order" in Paris, which allowed, nay encouraged, and almost compelled the Communalists to take possession of the city; instead of acknowledging, with shame, that the number of "orderly" National Guards who retired without striking a blow far exceeded that of the Insurrectionists, they say, "It was very sad, but what could we do?" Over the horrible carnage caused by the Commune and its subjection, they grieve not; for the vast destruction of the public buildings and private property of the city—which the Germans had so greatly spared—they blush not. "I do not wish the Tuileries to be re-built; they look so romantic in ruins!" said a French lady to us. In fine, you cannot get out of the head of the ordinary Frenchman that, after all, the bloody episode of the Commune did not present a somewhat *sublime* spectacle for Europe to look at! The miserable despicableness of the whole affair—from the murder of General Clement Thomas to the fusillades of M. de Galiffet—they fail to see. And of the one noble figure which those events produced, of the one pure and lofty personality which appeared in that lurid glare of blood and fire—Rossel—the French nation showed its appreciation—by shooting!

So we do not think the disheartenment we see in France is wholly due to the past. More probably does it arise in an ever-present dread of what may happen in the future, that is to say, next week, or to-morrow. Unlike Mr. Micawber, they are always expecting something *bad* to "turn up," and hence the ceaseless uneasiness, which he who runs may read upon the faces of every class of the French people. They have no confidence either in their army or in their representatives, to protect them from any day falling the prey of a Communist cataclysm, or a despotic *coup d'état*. The Frenchman has none of that innate respect for law which characterised the ancient Romans, and which the modern Italians have shown in no small degree in their recent vicissitudes; and consequently, he has no trust in any ultimate bond wherewith the nation or society itself may hold together. He goes about, the victim to a waking nightmare that he is falling into space. And if he sees in the army a dynastic instrument, it is to be feared that he regards the representative body in something the same light. Unfortunately, no Frenchman whose opinions are not those of the majority—whatever those may be—is willing to accept the fact that the elect of the nation really represents the nation at all! This comes of Napoleon the Third and his "arranged" *plébiscites*. The fact that the man whom it is now the fashion to say that nobody approved of but a few courtiers and Corsicans, was nominally the elect of millions, altogether, and not unnaturally, destroys the faith of most Frenchmen in the significance of the verdict of the ballot urns. Now, it is not true that Corsicans

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and courtiers alone approved of Napoleon in his palmy days, but it is true that he sowed corruption broadcast through the land, making it impossible to discover what was sincere and what was paid for in the allegiance given to his *régime*. That he contrived to utterly demoralise France is certain; and that he was not personally corrupt in money matters, will not cover the blackness of that crime. As to the corruption of his Court, it passed belief. We were speaking not long ago to a gentleman who had the *entrée* to the Tuileries, and was a personal friend of the Imperial family. "You cannot conceive the difficulties with which the Emperor had to contend; there was hardly a man at his Court whom he could trust," he said. "To give you a slight instance of it: Count ——, of turf celebrity, was riding in the Bois, mounted on a favourite and valuable English thoroughbred, when he was met by ——, who you know was an important member of the Emperor's household. The latter said to him: 'That is the very horse the Emperor wants, you really must let me purchase it for the Imperial stables.' Count —— answered that he did not wish to part with the horse, and that if he did so, he should make His Majesty a present of it, and on no account should it be the subject of a business transaction. Some days later two Imperial grooms came to him saying, they were come for the horse. The Count was very much surprised; however, he let it go, and soon after was invited to dine at the Tuileries. After dinner the Emperor said to him, 'That is a nice horse I had from you, *mais, mon cher Comte, c'était un peu cher!*' 'Dear?' said the exasperated nobleman. 'Why, I made your Majesty a present of it!' The Emperor simply replied, '—— said it cost ten thousand francs, and I gave him the money.'" This, our informant assured us, was only one of hundreds of occasions when Napoleon was cheated and fleeced right and left by persons of exalted position whom it was impossible for him to dismiss from his service.

The story is typical of the whole system upon which the Second Empire was founded. Everybody who chose might get money out of the government on some plea or other; if not in the audacious way we have related, in the smoother and less startling methods by which political adherence may be bought and sold. Everybody was bribed; everybody robbed on his own account; no enormity in subordinates could be punished, because that would have shaken the whole system. The money which should have been applied to the organisation of the army was used to corrupt the people; yet no one can have lately visited France without perceiving that Bonapartism is regaining ground. Honesty and good faith, though they certainly have not ceased to exist, no longer circulate in France. For this Louis Napoleon is largely answerable; but still more so are the teachers of the religion that "the end justifies the means," the enormously

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strong army of the "infallible" Pope. So long as they retain the education of the country in their hands they may well sing, "Let who will make its laws." And so long as French children are taught that they are to be Ultramontanes first, Frenchmen if you please, they may grow up to be anything, from Federalist to Legitimist, but the early teaching will hold good; patriotism will ever be put off with the second place, if indeed any place whatever be accorded to it. France will be a nation of partisans in lieu of a nation of patriots.

We have given an anecdote to illustrate the *moral* of the imperial Court. We will give another by way of example of the practices of the priesthood. A deputy of the Extreme Left, representing a department some hundred miles from Paris, was accosted one day by one of his constituents, a parish priest, who requested him to use his influence with the minister of public worship (then M. Jules Simon), to obtain a grant of money in aid of the restoration of his church. The deputy told him that he should have been very glad to oblige him, and that had the object in view been an educational work he would have been happy to comply with his request; but that he could not conscientiously apply for funds to serve the purposes of a Church with the principles of which he in no way went along. So, as he supposed, the matter ended. Some time after he came across the minister in the lobby of the Assembly, who said to him, "Your little affair is settled." "My little affair?" said the deputy. "What do you mean by that?" On which it transpired that the priest, in concert with the deputy's wife, had successfully petitioned *in his name* for the grant which he had so resolutely refused to ask for.

The clerical party on the one side, and every one who is not prepared to stand by the Syllabus, and the Vatican Council, and the whole edifice of modern Catholicism on the other, form two more groups of irreconcilable opponents and conflicting interests.

Again, there is the sleepless contest between the great towns and the country districts: and, in alluding to this part of our subject, we will pass over the more superficial aspects of it—its outward signs; such as, whether we are to listen to the counsels of the Breton nobility or of the Paris *bourgeoisie;* such as, whether the Assembly is to be at Paris or Versailles—and endeavour to go to the root of the evil which is too often wholly ignored and disregarded—the opposition between the proletariat of the towns and the proletariat of the country. Let us take the last—that is, the peasantry—first. We must remember, in order to judge them correctly, that they are not Spartan helots or Russian serfs, or even English agricultural labourers. The stupendous, yet mostly barren physical force which must always belong to numbers, is not alone theirs. Many of them are proprietors, and to them all

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universal suffrage—which Legitimists would fain curtail and Communalists would wish to render powerless—gives an acknowledged and legitimate potency which practically makes them masters of the country. For the most part they are incredibly ignorant, their only education proceeding from the *Frères Chrétiens* and other religious orders, which perhaps is rather worse than receiving no instruction at all. They are very hard-working—especially the women—and extraordinarily thrifty; to an extent, in fact, which all who are acquainted with their real condition must deplore, since generations of half-starved men and women are the cost of the stockingful of dearly earned gold pieces. On the whole they are mentally and physically timid and unadventurous. In religion they are still in the dark ages of superstition, and are a good deal under the influence of cotemporary prophecies and miracles. Nevertheless, they do not thoroughly realise that oneness of politics and religion, which the priests are at the present time engaged in trying to inculcate into their minds; and we doubt if the beau ideal of the Church—Henri Cinq and the New Crusade—finds much favour in their sight. The *légende Napoléonienne*, which once had its stronghold at the cottar's hearth, is not dead yet, though it has lost some of its motive power. They dislike war, a large army, heavy taxation and Communism; but they are credulous, and easily duped by fair promises.

Opposed to them stand the workmen of the great towns, in particular of Paris. The Parisian artisan is the most intelligent skilled workman in the world; he is well paid, and his vote dignifies him with the position of an enfranchised citizen. But he is the most restless and dissatisfied of mortals. His creed is one of universal hatred; he hates the Army, he hates the Church; he hates every man who wears a better coat than he does; that he hates his own associates is probable, as no two members of the Communal administration could keep from quarrelling with each other. And above all, he hates and despises the peasantry. Socially he is a Bohemian, politically and religiously he is a Nihilist. So far as his aspirations are in any way defined, he desires a Federation of great towns, and, amongst other things, the abolition of the law of inheritance—all private fortunes to lapse to the State. It is a misapplication of terms to say that he has the smallest love of freedom, at least as we understand the word, and as to patriotism, he denounces it as obsolete. In the Communal insurrection he showed himself devoid of political instinct. In the matter of education he is very little superior to the peasant for whom he professes so profound a contempt.* "Il comprend tout et ne sait

* We speak of the rule; far be it from us to say that it has not brilliant exceptions. Nor should we omit to do justice to one sterling virtue which belongs to the French *ouvrier*, namely, his remarkable honesty. As a practical instance of this, we may mention the case of a Parisian artisan

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rien," says an eminent French writer, of the Parisian artisan. "Hélas! l'ouvrier est devenu poseur et prétentieux sans cesser d'être barbare!"

We have spoken of the irreconcilable differences between the Army and the people, between the clericals and non-clericals, between the town and the country. The causes of these lie deeper than do those of party or dynastic feuds, notwithstanding all the heart-burnings and bloodshed that these latter may give rise to. We must leave it to others to find out how they may be remedied or palliated without deviating from the principles of political morality or upsetting the foundations of political economy. No statesman had ever set before him a more worthy or more difficult task to perform.

Before concluding, we will give a few lines to the existing state of the French army. We were told in Paris that, since the war, great things had been done by way of improving it. "Do you know," a friend said to us, "that the men begin to salute their officers, which they never used to do?" We are afraid that discipline must be still at rather a premium, when we have seen—what we believe is to be seen in no other country—sentries on guard chatting and fraternizing with the passers by. The French soldier of the line was as hopelessly untidy and slovenly in his dress as ever. Soldiers of every grade seemed low-spirited and sad, and nearly all the men looked terribly thin and hollow-cheeked. We were informed on good authority that the French Government commits the fatal mistake of not giving its soldiers enough to eat.

It cannot be said too often or too emphatically, that where the army of a nation is a nation armed—and this is the direction in which France and every continental state is tending—the term of service should, and may be made the means of raising the standard of the entire people. It is in truth a grand equality that is implied in the axiom, "Every citizen shall serve the state," of which this period of compulsory soldiering is a practical lesson. Regular hours, steady discipline and proper nourishment, not forgetting the schoolmaster, who should always work shoulder to shoulder with the drill serjeant, ought to send the raw recruit of a year or so before back to his village twice the man he left it.

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who happened to find the purse of a friend of ours, containing his card and a large sum of money, and who went to every hotel in the *quartier* in search of the owner, to whom he at last succeeded in restoring it.

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Tradition.

If I were Ranger of the "Sands of Time," or if Mr. Longfellow would kindly delegate to me some other authority consistent with republican ideas over that territory, I would immediately put up the following notice:—

"*Great men who propose leaving their footprints on these Sands, are particularly requested to walk straight, and not to wear boots liable to make indistinct or irregular impressions. Small people detected in the use of boots which do not belong to them will be prosecuted.*

"*By Order.*"

And this is my reason why. The firm, sharp, swinging step of the truly Great—leading straight from point to point—may be followed, but not imitated. The moment there is left the mark of a stumble, or a deviation, or a limp, the Small seize upon it, and flatter themselves that because they have acquired the *fact* they have adopted the *form*. One illustration will show better than a page of reasoning what I mean. Years ago it was demonstrated that mere mechanical flourishes and ornamentation—however elaborate it might be—upon a bank note, was no protection against forgery; but that a work of art—the simpler the better—was not to be successfully copied. Hence the late Mr. Maclise was employed to design the note now in circulation, and I am told that the vignette in the corner has been a stumbling-block in the path of would-be "smashers"—if that be the right term to apply to the fabricators of false paper money. A copy—to the educated—never has the sharpness and decision of the original, but if this be marred by any eccentricity or fault, and *that* be reproduced, it catches the eye of the uninitiated, and carries off the fraud. So, to return to the Sands aforesaid, we find that if some masters of the art turn in their toes a little, or have a heel worn down, or a nail misplaced in the soles of their shoes, such peculiarity is adopted, and the "forlorn and shipwrecked brother" is deluded into the belief that a Dickens or a Landseer, a Bentham, a Rossini, or a Kean, have passed that way—a way leading not to the "shining table-lands," but to the dismal swamps of mediocrity.

Thus in every profession we find *traditions* formed for the most part upon the faults of eminent men. Tricks of tone, manner, expression, easily picked up, and which pass—so to speak—as trade-marks.

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Where is the young barrister who does not address the Bench as "mi Lud" the first time he opens a brief in court? the sucking attorney who does not talk of "sheddles?" the fledgling doctor who does not speak of the baby as "us" when called in to prescribe for its little ills? the embryo R. A. who does not begin with some trick caught from an Etty or a Turner? the aspirant for literary fame who does not take his dip out of the dregs of some well-used inkstand? the ambitious "general utility" who does not form himself upon the failings of a Macready or a Mathews? It would never do for Mr. Bluebag to say "my Lord," or for Mr. Pounce to call that list of debts a "schedule." That would be a proclamation of greenness, an audacious departure from tradition, at which the managing clerk would frown. The judge would lift his spectacles and ask the Associate, "who is that young gentleman?" to his utter demoralization. Mamma would really be sure that her darling ought to have better advice, if Mr. Redlamp called that wonder of his race he, or she, or it—and so on. We all like to put on something belonging to our successful elders, and wear it in a jaunty off-hand way as though it were our own. And our successful elders like to see us do so. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. When Mr. Buskin, entrusted with two lines in the new melodrama, talks about his "cheyild," drags his left foot as he walks, and rolls his eyes at nothing in particular, the stage manager roars approval, and observes that the young man will do.

If this sort of thing floated only on the surface, it would not matter, but it indicates what is to be found below—a worship of *tradition;* a fear of doing things that have not been done, and of thinking things that have not been plainly stamped with the hall-mark of authority—which is standing in our way as a nation. Mind, I have not a word to say against *tradition* in the abstract. Taken as the mariner takes his beacons and lights, to warn him off rocks and shoals, *traditions* are to be respected. We can mark all, or nearly all, the bad places, and in the absence of warnings to the contrary, may presume that we are sailing on in safety. It is impossible to mark all the good ones, and a navigator who required to be assured of every inch of his way, would seldom get out of sight of port. But some of our social pilots will not budge unless they see a light dead ahead, and avoid with a thrill of horror localities where they see big foreign ships passing in perfect safety, because some one, years ago, hung out a red light on the spot! Perhaps there never was any danger there. Perhaps the reef, or whatever it was, has been washed away. It was a Scylla; it ought to have been a Charybdis—it *is* neither; but woe to the audacious hand that would dare take down the red light! Now supposing that white means safety, and red danger, the removal of one obsolete red light is of more importance than the establishment of

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half a dozen white ones. Where we have passed once, we may pass again; others may follow us. The "all right" beacon then becomes (as grammarians say) "understood." But a bogus red light is that fine old nuisance, "a mockery, a delusion, and a snare"—a snare, because it leads to a want of respect for red lights which mark real dangers. Half our troubles—political and social—arise from the misuse of red lights. For example, supposing that our forefathers had not persisted in hanging up lights more or less red over the door of every place of worship that did not belong to the Established Church—should we have all this hubbub about cancation? We made dissent by illiberality to Dissenters.

Using the word in its general sense, we are (next to the Chinese, perhaps) the most conservative people under the sun. How we distrust and dislike anything that has the mark of novelty upon it? To call an idea or an article "new-fangled" is to condemn it. How many inventions have we driven abroad because we look upon inventors as our natural enemies—disturbers of the public peace? Our cousins on the other side of the Atlantic are vastly our superiors in this respect. Everything that is new has a charm for them; but they mar their advantage by running into the contrary extreme and scoffing at all that is old—not because it is worn out, but simply because they have not got it. Our conservatism—though it has kept us back on the path of progress—has warned us against the Jack o'Lanterns which gather on either side, and have lured more excitable communities into the mud. And so it is useful in its way, pretty much as a drag is useful when you are driving in a hilly part of the country. Its main prop is *tradition*. If you can raise an uncontradicted cry of "Who ever heard of such a thing?" in private life, the thing is doomed. If in public life honourable gentlemen are assured that the proposal in question has good precedent, it will pass. The precedent may belong to a time which had nothing in common with our own; but it is a precedent, and must be respected. In the world of fashion we do not ask if this or that be right or wrong, convenient or inconvenient, pleasant or the contrary; but only if it is or is not *done*. To do what is done, is to be respectable; and to be respectable, is to be happy. Sit down to dinner in a black necktie when "other fellows" wear white (or vice versâ), my young friend, and see how unhappy you will be! Now a Frenchman would rather enjoy being so *distingué*, and an American not care a red cent one way or the other.

This is a small thing? Granted. So is a feather, but it will show which way the wind blows. Taken alone, the saying "sheddle" and "cheyild" are small things, but they indicate the set of *tradition* in two professions. It is often urged, that lawyers uphold what is bad in our law for sordid reasons. That is a libel. No class of men have

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been more earnest in recommending reforms in practice than those who have been the first to lose by them; but to principles hallowed by *tradition*, they cling. As a lover treasures a withered flower, or a faded bow of ribbon which has once decked the bosom of his adored one, so does a lawyer cleave to the rules of a bygone age. What mind educated under other training—what jurist of any other nation—can defend, in these days, the principle handed down from feudal times, that land is to be considered as a special property; that one who holds it for the life of a gentleman aged eighty, has one class of estate dignified and privileged; and that another who possesses it, or has power over it, for nine hundred and ninety-nine years, has a mere chattel? This is not a small thing. It is going to give us some trouble. We have kept up the red light too long.

I write not about great things, and will not offend again. I think that if one could tear away, and consign to a congenial dust-bin, the rags and tatters of *tradition*, we should find in many cases that there is no body underneath. Nothing but a scarecrow.

The great army of reformers is recruited from amongst the intelligent mechanics—men who earn about the pay of a captain in the line. No class profess a greater contempt for *tradition*, and no class are more slaves to it. No class cry out more loudly against injustice, and no class is more unjust. I pass by the rules of their Trades' Unions,—rules which, if established as law by the ukase of an emperor, would call down upon him the most scathing denunciations. Such tyranny! such oppression! would never have been heard of. I pass this by, and come to their domestic traditions. Can any one explain why working men love black raiment? Black, says *tradition*, is respectable. Why? Grant that "Sunday clothes" never wear out, and are not to be made available for workday use, is black broadcloth a cheap, a durable, or a becoming dress? It costs more at first, its glory is short-lived, it looks worse than any other when that glory has departed. *Ichabod!* is sooner said of a black suit than of any other. And yet, black trousers, a black "claw-hammer coat," and a black satin waistcoat is the delight of the "intelligent mechanic!" A black satin vest! Is there any article of costume which is more unsatisfactory in its youth and makes more haste to become seedy? Who can bear the ordeal of a tail coat in the day-time? Not my Lord Marquis of Carabas, who has fifty costumes to choose from; but honest Brown, the carpenter, has two suits, and both black.

Honest Brown spends enough money upon his table to have good meals every day, but he does not get them. Mrs. Brown's method of cookery is so extravagant, that if carried out in the establishment of a duchess, would bring his Grace into bankruptcy. She despises anything that is cheap. She invents nothing, utilises nothing. "Messes," under which category is included a score of dishes which are

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palatable to you and me—are her abomination. She likes plain English food (which means expensive meat wastefully and badly cooked), and "don't want none of your foreigneering ways." If the primest six-year-old mutton could be sold at two-pence the pound, she would turn up her nose at it. Her tradition is, that all that is cheap (in the way of eating), must be nasty. No Australian beef, no cheap salads, no stock-pot for *her*. She has a baked shoulder-of-mutton for dinner, and throws the bone away.

The Browns have traditions against the use of fresh air and cold water. These are unwholesome. Their pride does not allow them to use a public washhouse, so the "things" are washed and dried at home. The children grow up with pasty faces, narrow chests, and a chronic cold in the head. Out of his own domain Brown is a very glutton for change. The House of Lords, the Game Laws, the Land Laws, the Law of Primogeniture (whatever that may be), are all wrong. A bloated aristocracy has sucked the roses out of his babies' faces. He is for an universal smash-up of everything—army, navy, civil service. Even the Crown itself is not sacred. He dreams of a republic, with Mr. Odger as president. But the idea that he may make himself more comfortable as things are by an alteration of his *own* affairs, is the last that enters his brain. He would shake society to its core; but open his windows? make that shoulder-of-mutton bone into soup? Never!

A few years before the Crimean war, the *tradition* that everything that was British was bad, and everything French good, reached its highest force. It arose partly from a natural revulsion against the ideas of a previous generation, and partly because people liked to show that they had been abroad. I am going to take Proverbs in hand some day, and will pay particular attention to that which says, "It is an ill bird which fouls its own nest." An ill bird, indeed! Why, don't we all know a score of men and women who pass for people of taste, and are koo-too'd accordingly, simply because they abuse their surroundings? Well, poor France is not the model she used to be made, but *tradition* clings to her still. We still speak of the average Frenchman as polite, and believe in the taste of French women. *Taste*, mark we—not fashion! Fashion, I give in. It has so long been dinned into our ears that our own women display want of judgment in the selection of colours, that we allow this accusation to pass unchallenged. A Frenchman asserts that Englishwomen dress badly, just as a parrot says, "pretty Poll." Even M. Taine joins in the traditional charge about colour, and this at a time when a mixture of green and blue, without the relief of a complementary tint, was the latest fashion from Paris! If English ladies had originated the idea of returning to the fashions of their great-grandmothers, what a shout of derision would have been raised over the water? If any but French

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modistes had invented other fashions that could be mentioned, and we were to try them by any standard, we should have to pronounce them vulgar. It requires a bold mind to use that word in connection with anything that is French. *Tradition* insists that to be vulgar is not to be French; and that to be French excludes the possibility of being vulgar. Is wearing sham jewellery and false hair, vulgar? Is bringing the rouge-pot, the bismuth, and the belladonna of the ballet-girl into the drawing-room, vulgar? We should have thought so thirty years ago, but such practices became French, and *ipso facto* permissible in the most polite society. Thirty years ago a woman with a painted face would have run a great risk of being requested to leave the dress circle of a respectable theatre. The brilliancy of her complexion would have been taken as *primâ facie* evidence of her belonging to a class with which the men of *that* day did not like their wives and sisters to rub skirts. The class in question lead the fashion now.

Tradition allows the French language to be considered a disinfectant—a sort of moral per-sulphate of iron—in which wicked ideas and nasty subjects become innocuous. Expressed in English they make us shudder, or raise our handkerchief to our nose. Printed or spoken in another tongue we find no harm in them, and the air is filled with *bouquet d'esprit.*

Tradition allows us to take young ladies to see plays at the St. James's which, if produced at a Concert Hall in Whitechapel, would engage the attention of the magistrates at the next Licensing Sessions. Granted that the French language lends itself to put nasty things into an apparently nice form. Is strychnine the less deadly when it is made up into a sugar-coated pill?

The ridiculous traditions which degrade the English stage, and hamper English actors, will not be recited here. The subject is worn threadbare. Kind hearted, genial Albert Smith broke several lances against them, and every "funny writer" who has been two or three times behind the scenes, has had his say. If you want to see what comes of an organised revolt against this nonsense go to Mrs. Bancroft's theatre.

The "romantic East" and the "gorgeous West," are fields in which *tradition* flourishes. Oil, water, and word-painters have incurred heavy responsibilities in this respect. I remember a coloured engraving, which used to deck Mr. Ackerman's window, of a radiant being, rather lightly clad, with a complexion of the softest strawberry ice, and beautiful blue hair; who illustrated, I think, one of Victor Hugo's poems. She reclined with infinite grace on a grass hammock, slung over a delicious pool, surrounded by tropical vegetation—fruits and flowers of the most gorgeous hues. One little, lazy, unslippered foot played with the water, and the bright drops trickled back reluc-

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tantly from the sweet invader. Her great dreamy eyes were turned heavenwards, and I thought, "Oh! what a country to live, and loll, and love in!" I had not been East or West then. The other day I cut the following extract out of a review of a new poem:

"The story opens with an exquisite description of an Indian girl asleep in a tropical forest. Her place of slumber is a bower as fairy-like as ever poetic vision saw. Here is a glimpse of it:

Through the transparent roof of shining leaves,
  Where the deep sunlight weaves
Threads like a spider's web of silvern white,
  Faint falls the dreamy light

Down the grey bolls and boughs that intervene
  On to the carpet green,
Prinkt with all wondrous flowers, on emerald brakes
  Where the still speckled snakes

Crawl shaded; and above the shaded ground,
  Amid the deep-sea sound
Of the high branches, bright birds scream and fly,
  And chattering parrots cry;

And everywhere beneath them in the bowers
  Float things like living flowers,
Hovering and settling."

The maternal parent of that Indian girl could not have been aware of her absence from home in that locality. I shudder to think of the consequences of going to sleep in such a place. Was it not Will Fern, in 'The Chimes,' who says that ladies are fond of sketching his cottage; but remarks, "There ain't no weather in a pictur"? In the two pictures I have before me *there are no insects and no fever!* Gracious heavens! to think of my lovely Bayadère's soft creamy limbs and delicate bosom at the mercy of all the mosquitoes, gallinippers, green flies, Jack Spaniards, black ants, *et id genus omne*, which were *certain* to infest that pool! To realize the all but certainty of her darling little big toe being attacked by a jigger! Why, she would be the colour of an Epping sausage, and have chills and fever before night! It is to be hoped that her sister imprudent —the Indian girl—had a plentiful supply of quinine and carbolic acid soap at hand.

And the gorgeous fruits and flowers? You may see the pick of the latter at Kew—minus the *plaga*. Well, put aside the fact that they are foreign and curious, and for how many of them would you give an English moss-rose?

Then the heat, the dust, the squalor; none of which go into the picture. Fancy Cleopatra chasing the lively flea! She must have

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had scores of such *apteræ* on board that splendid barge of hers, if the land of Egypt has not undergone a wonderful change. The great Mogul himself was once sadly bothered by a bluebottle fly, and I should not wonder if the lineal descendants of that insect had been indirectly the cause of separating many a Vizier's head from his shoulders. As a museum of antiquities the "romantic East" is not to be decried; but put forward as a land of luxury and comfort it is, in my humble judgment, the greatest impostor out—except the "gorgeous West."

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[READINGS IN AMERICA.]

II.—The Dream Woman:

A Mystery, in Four Narratives.

By WILKIE COLLINS.

SECOND NARRATIVE.

The Ostler's Story Concluded.

XI.

I expect nobody to approve of what I have next to tell of myself.

In three weeks from the day when my mother had identified her with the Woman of the Dream, I took Alicia Warlock to Church, and made her my wife. I was a man bewitched. Again and again I say it, I was a man bewitched!

During the interval before my marriage, our little household at the cottage was broken up. My mother and my aunt quarrelled. My mother, believing in the Dream, entreated me to break off my engagement. My aunt, believing in the cards, urged me to marry.

This difference of opinion produced a dispute between them, in the course of which my aunt Chance—quite unconscious of having any superstitious feelings of her own—actually set out the cards which prophesied happiness to me in my married life, and asked my mother whether anybody but "a blinded heathen could be fule enough after seeing those cairds to believe in a dream!" This was, naturally, too much for my mother's patience; hard words followed on either side; Mrs. Chance returned in dudgeon to her friends in Scotland. She left me a written statement of my future prospects, as revealed by the cards—and with it an address at which a Post-office order would reach her. "The day was no that far off," she remarked, "when Francie might remember what he owed to his aunt Chance, maintaining her ain unbleemished widowhood on thratty punds a year."

Having refused to give her sanction to my marriage, my mother also refused to be present at the wedding, or to visit Alicia afterwards. There was no anger at the bottom of this conduct on her part. Believing as she did in the Dream, she was simply in mortal fear of my wife. I understood this—and I made allowances for her. Not a cross word passed between us. My one happy remembrance now—

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though I did disobey her in the matter of my marriage—is this: I loved and respected my good mother to the last.

As for my wife, she expressed no regret at the estrangement between her mother-in-law and herself. By common consent, we never spoke on that subject. We settled in the manufacturing town which I have already mentioned; and we kept a lodging house. My kind master, at my request, granted me a lump sum in place of my annuity. This put us into a good house, decently furnished. For a while, things went well enough. I may describe myself at this time of my life as a happy man.

My misfortunes began with a return of the complaint from which my mother had already suffered. The doctor confessed, when I asked him the question, that there was danger to be dreaded this time. Naturally, after hearing this, I was a good deal away at the cottage. Naturally also, I left the business of looking after our house, in my absence, to my wife. Little by little, I found her beginning to alter towards me. While my back was turned, she formed acquaintances with people of the doubtful and dissipated sort. One day, I observed something in her manner which forced the suspicion on me that she had been drinking. Before the week was out, my suspicion was a certainty. From keeping company with drunkards, she had grown to be a drunkard herself.

I did all a man could do to reclaim her. Quite useless! She had never really returned the love I felt for her: I had no influence; I could do nothing. My mother, hearing of this last worst trouble, resolved to try what her influence could do. Ill as she was, I found her one day dressed to go out.

"I am not long for this world, Francis," she said. "I shall not feel easy on my death-bed, unless I have done my best to the last to make you happy. I mean to put my own fears and my own feelings out of the question, and to go with you to your wife, and try what I can do to reclaim her. Take me home with you, Francis. Let me do all I can to help my son, before it's too late."

How could I disobey her? We took the railway to the town: it was only half an hour's ride. By one o'clock in the afternoon we reached my house. It was our dinner hour, and Alicia was in the kitchen. I was able to take my mother quietly into the parlour, and then prepare my wife for the visit. She had drunk but little at that early hour, and luckily the devil in her was tamed for the time.

She followed me into the parlour, and the meeting passed off better than I had ventured to forecast, with this one drawback, that my mother—though she tried hard to control herself—shrank from looking my wife in the face when she spoke to her. It was a relief to me when Alicia began to prepare the table for dinner.

She laid the cloth, brought in the bread-tray, and cut some slices

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for us from the loaf. Then she returned to the kitchen. At that moment, while I was still anxiously watching my mother, I was startled by seeing the same ghastly change pass over her face which had altered it on the morning when Alicia and she first met. Before I could say a word, she started up with a look of horror.

"Take me back!—home, home again, Francis! Come with me, and never go back more!"

I was afraid to ask for an explanation; I could only sign to her to be silent, and help her quickly to the door. As we passed the bread-tray on the table, she stopped and pointed to it.

"Did you see what your wife cut your bread with?" she asked.

"No, mother; I was not noticing. What was it?"

"Look!"

I did look. A new clasp-knife, with a buckhorn handle, lay with the loaf in the bread-tray. I stretched out my hand to possess myself of it. At the same moment, there was a noise in the kitchen, and my mother caught me by the arm.

"The knife of the dream! Francis, I'm faint with fear—take me away, before she comes back!"

I couldn't speak, to comfort or even to answer her. Superior as I was to superstition, the discovery of the knife staggered me. In silence, I helped my mother out of the house and took her home.

I held out my hand to say good-by. She tried to stop me.

"Don't go back, Francis! don't go back!"

"I must get the knife, mother. I must go back by the next train."

I held to that resolution. By the next train I went back.

XII.

My wife had, of course, discovered our secret departure from the house. She had been drinking. She was in a fury of passion. The dinner in the kitchen was flung under the grate; the cloth was off the parlour table. Where was the knife?

I was foolish enough to ask for it. She refused to give it to me. In the course of the dispute between us which followed, I discovered that there was a horrible story attached to the knife. It had been used in a murder—years since—and had been so skilfully hidden that the authorities had been unable to produce it at the trial. By help of some of her disreputable friends, my wife had been enabled to purchase this relic of a bygone crime. Her perverted nature set some horrid unacknowledged value on the knife. Seeing there was no hope of getting it by fair means, I determined to search for it, later in the day, in secret. The search was unsuccessful. Night came on, and I left the house to walk about the streets. You will understand what a

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broken man I was by this time, when I tell you I was afraid to sleep in the same room with her!

Three weeks passed. Still she refused to give up the knife; and still that fear of sleeping in the same room with her possessed me. I walked about at night, or dozed in the parlour, or sat watching by my mother's bed-side. Before the end of the first week in the new month, the worst misfortune of all befel me—my mother died. It wanted then but a short time of my birthday. She had longed to live till that day. I was present at her death. Her last words in this world were addressed to me:

"Don't go back, my son—don't go back!"

I was obliged to go back, if it was only to watch my wife. In the last days of my mother's illness she had spitefully added a sting to my grief by declaring that she would assert her right to attend the funeral. In spite of all that I could do or say, she held to her word. On the day appointed for the burial she forced herself—inflamed and shameless with drink—into my presence, and swore she would walk in the funeral procession to my mother's grave.

This last insult—after all I had gone through already—was more than I could endure. It maddened me. Try to make allowances for a man beside himself. I struck her.

The instant the blow was dealt, I repented it. She crouched down, silent, in a corner of the room, and eyed me steadily. It was a look that cooled my hot blood in an instant. There was no time now to think of making atonement. I could only risk the worst, and make sure of her till the funeral was over. I locked her into her bedroom.

When I came back, after laying my mother in the grave, I found her sitting by the bedside, very much altered in look and bearing, with a bundle on her lap. She faced me quietly; she spoke with a curious stillness in her voice—strangely and unnaturally composed in look and manner.

"No man has ever struck me yet," she said. "My husband shall have no second opportunity. Set the door open and let me go."

She passed me, and left the room. I saw her walk away up the street.

Was she gone for good?

All that night I watched and waited. No footstep came near the house. The next night, overcome by fatigue, I lay down in bed in my clothes, with the door locked, the key on the table, and the candle burning. My slumber was not disturbed. The third night, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, passed, and nothing happened. I lay down on the seventh night—still suspicious of something happening; still in my clothes; still with the door locked, the key on the table, and the candle burning.

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My rest was disturbed. I woke twice, without any sensation of uneasiness. The third time, that horrid shivering of the night at the lonely inn, that awful sinking pain at the heart, came back again, and roused me in an instant.

My eyes opened towards the left-hand side of the bed. And there stood, looking at me——

The Dream-Woman again? No! My wife. The living woman, with the face of the Dream—in the attitude of the Dream—the fair arm up; the knife clasped in the delicate white hand.

I sprang upon her on the instant; but not quickly enough to stop her from hiding the knife. Without a word from me, without a cry from her, I pinioned her in a chair. With one hand I felt up her sleeve; and there, where the Dream-Woman had hidden the knife, my wife had hidden it—the knife with the buckhorn handle, that looked like new.

What I felt when I made that discovery I could not realise at the time, and I can't describe now. I took one steady look at her with the knife in my hand.

"You meant to kill me?" I said.

"Yes," she answered, "I meant to kill you." She crossed her arms over her bosom, and stared me coolly in the face. "I shall do it yet," she said. "With that knife."

I don't know what possessed me—I swear to you I am no coward; and yet I acted like a coward. The horrors got hold of me. I couldn't look at her—I couldn't speak to her. I left her (with the knife in my hand), and went out into the night.

There was a bleak wind abroad, and the smell of rain was in the air. The church clocks chimed the quarter as I walked beyond the last houses in the town. I asked the first policeman I met what hour that was, of which the quarter past had just struck.

The man looked at his watch, and answered, "Two o'clock." Two in the morning. What day of the month was this day that had just begun? I reckoned it up from the date of my mother's funeral. The horrid parallel between the dream and the reality was complete—it was my birthday!

Had I escaped the mortal peril which the dream foretold? or had I only received a second warning?

As that doubt crossed my mind I stopped on my way out of the town. The air had revived me—I felt in some degree like my own self again. After a little thinking, I began to see plainly the mistake I had made in leaving my wife free to go where she liked and to do as she pleased.

I turned instantly, and made my way back to the house.

It was still dark. I had left the candle burning in the bedchamber. When I looked up to the window of the room now, there was no light

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in it. I advanced to the house door. On going away I remembered to have closed it; on trying it now, I found it open.

I waited outside, never losing sight of the house till daylight. Then I ventured in-doors—listened, and heard nothing—looked into kitchen, scullery, parlour; and found nothing—went up at last into the bedroom. It was empty.

A pick-lock lay on the floor, which told me how she had gained entrance in the night. And that was the one trace I could find of the Dream Woman.

XIII.

I WAITED in the house till the town was astir for the day—and then I went to consult a lawyer. In the confused state of my mind at the time, I had one clear notion of what I meant to do: I was determined to sell my house and leave the neighbourhood. There were obstacles in the way which I had not counted on. I was told I had creditors to satisfy before I could leave—I, who had given my wife the money to pay my bills regularly every week! Inquiry showed that she had embezzled every farthing of the money that I had entrusted to her. I had no choice but to pay over again.

Placed in this awkward position, my first duty was to set things right, with the help of my lawyer. During my forced sojourn in the town I did two foolish things. And, as a consequence that followed, I heard once more, and heard for the last time, of my wife.

In the first place, having got possession of the knife, I was rash enough to keep it in my pocket. In the second place, having something of importance to say to the lawyer, at a late hour of the evening, I went to his house after dark—alone and on foot. I got there safely enough. Returning, I was seized on from behind by two men; dragged down a dark passage, and robbed—not only of the little money I had about me, but also of the knife. It was the lawyer's opinion (as it was mine) that the thieves were among the disreputable acquaintances formed by my wife, and that they had attacked me at her instigation. To confirm this view I received a letter the next day, without date or address, written in Alicia's hand. The first line informed me that the knife was back again in her possession. The second line reminded me of the day when I had struck her. The third line warned me that she would wash out the stain of that blow in my blood, and repeated the words, "I shall do it with the knife!"

These things happened a year ago. The law laid hands on the men who had robbed me—but from that time to this the law has failed completely to find a trace of my wife.

My story is told. When I had paid the creditors and paid the legal expenses, I had barely five pounds left out of the sale of my house; and I had the world to begin over again. Some months since—drift-

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ing here and there—I found my way to Underbridge. The landlord at the inn had known something of my father's family in times past. He gave me (all he had to give) my food, and shelter in the yard. Except on market-days, there is nothing to do. In the coming winter the inn is to be shut up, and I shall have to shift for myself. My old master would help me if I applied to him—but I don't like to apply: he has done more for me already than I deserve. Besides, in another year who knows but my troubles may all be at an end? Next winter will bring me nigh to my next birthday—and my next birthday may be the day of my death. Yes! it's true I sat up all last night; and I heard two in the morning strike: and nothing happened. Still, allowing for that, the time to come is a time I don't trust. My wife has got the knife—my wife is looking for me. I am above superstition, mind! I don't say I believe in dreams; I only say, Alicia Warlock is looking for me. It is possible I may be wrong. It is possible I may be right. Who can tell?

THE THIRD NARRATIVE.

THE STORY CONTINUED BY PERCY FAIRBANK.

XIV.

WE took leave of Francis Raven at the door of Farleigh Hall, with the understanding that he might expect to hear from us again.

The same night Mrs. Fairbank and I had a discussion in the sanctuary of our own room. The topic was 'The Ostler's Story'; and the question in dispute between us turned on the measure of charitable duty that we owed to the Ostler himself.

The view I took of the man's narrative was of the purely matter-of-fact kind. Francis Raven had, in my opinion, brooded over the misty connection between his strange dream and his vile wife, until his mind was in a state of partial delusion on that subject. I was quite willing to help him with a trifle of money, and to recommend him to the kindness of my lawyer, if he was really in any danger and wanted advice. There, my idea of my duty towards this afflicted person began and ended.

Confronted with this sensible view of the matter, Mrs. Fairbank's romantic temperament rushed as usual into extremes. "I should no more think of losing sight of Francis Raven when his next birthday comes round," says my wife, "than I should think of laying down a good story with the last chapters unread. I am positively determined, Percy, to take him back with us, when we return to France, in the capacity of groom. What does one man more or less among the horses matter to people as rich as we are?" In this strain the partner of my joys and sorrow ran on; perfectly impenetrable to everything that

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I could say on the side of common-sense. Need I tell my married brethren how it ended? Of course I allowed my wife to irritate me, and spoke to her sharply. Of course, my wife turned her face away indignantly on the conjugal pillow, and burst into tears. Of course, upon that, "Mr." made his excuses, and "Mrs." had her own way.

Before the week was out we rode over to Underbridge, and duly offered to Francis Raven a place in our service as supernumerary groom.

At first the poor fellow seemed hardly able to realise his own extraordinary good fortune. Recovering himself, he expressed his gratitude modestly and becomingly. Mrs. Fairbank's ready sympathies overflowed as usual at her lips. She talked to him about our home in France, as if the worn, grey-headed ostler had been a child. "Such a dear old house, Francis; and such pretty gardens! Stables ten times as big as your stables here: quite a choice of rooms for you. You must learn the name of our house—it is called Maison Rouge. Our nearest town is Metz. We are within a walk of the beautiful river Moselle. And when we want a change we have only to take the railway to the frontier, and find ourselves in Germany."

Listening, so far, with a very bewildered face, Francis started and changed colour, when my wife reached the end of her last sentence.

"Germany?" he repeated.

"Yes. Does Germany remind you of anything?"

The ostler's eyes looked down sadly on the ground. "Germany reminds me of my wife," he replied.

"Indeed? How?"

"She once told me she had lived in Germany—long before I knew her—in the time when she was a young girl."

"Was she living with relations or friends?"

"She was living as governess in a foreign family."

"In what part of Germany?"

"I don't remember, ma'am. I doubt if she told me."

"Did she tell you the name of the family?"

"Yes, ma'am. It was a foreign name, and it has slipped my memory long since. The head of the family was a wine-grower in a large way of business—I remember that."

"Did you hear what sort of wine he grew? There are wine-growers in our neighbourhood. Was it Moselle wine?"

"I couldn't say, ma'am. I doubt if I ever heard."

There the conversation dropped. We engaged to communicate with Francis Raven before we left England, and took our leave.

I had made my arrangements to pay our round of visits to English friends, and to return to Maison Rouge in the summer. On the eve of departure, certain difficulties in connection with the management of

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some landed property of mine in Ireland, obliged us to alter our plans. Instead of getting back to our house in France in the summer, we only returned a week or two before Christmas. Francis Raven accompanied us, and was duly established, in the nominal capacity of stable-helper, among the servants at Maison Rouge.

Before long, some of the objections to taking him into our employment, which I had foreseen and had vainly mentioned to my wife, forced themselves on our attention in no very agreeable form.

Francis Raven failed (as I had feared he would) to get on smoothly with his fellow-servants. They were all French; and not one of them understood English. Francis, on his side, was equally ignorant of French. His reserved manners, his melancholy temperament, his solitary ways—all told against him. Our servants called him "the English Bear." He grew widely known in the neighbourhood under his nick-name. Quarrels took place, ending once or twice in blows. It became plain, even to Mrs. Fairbank herself, that some wise change must be made. While we were still considering what the change was to be, the unfortunate ostler was thrown on our hands, for some time to come, by an accident in the stables. Still pursued by his proverbial ill-luck, the poor wretch's leg was broken by a kick from a horse.

He was attended to by our own surgeon, in his comfortable bedroom at the stables. As the date of his birthday drew near he was still confined to his bed.

Physically speaking, he was doing very well. Morally speaking, the surgeon was not satisfied. Francis Raven was suffering under some unacknowledged mental disturbance, which interfered seriously with his rest at night. Hearing this, I thought it my duty to tell the medical attendant what was preying on the patient's mind. As a practical man, he shared my opinion that the ostler was in a state of delusion on the subject of his Wife and his Dream. "Curable delusion, in my opinion," the surgeon added, "if the experiment could be fairly tried."

"How can it be tried?" I asked.

Instead of replying, the surgeon put a question to me, on his side.

"Do you happen to know," he said, "that this year is Leap Year?"

"Mrs. Fairbank reminded me of it yesterday," I answered. "Otherwise I might *not* have known it."

"Do you think Francis Raven knows that this year is Leap Year?"

(I began to see dimly what my friend was driving at.)

"It depends," I answered, "on whether he has got an English almanack. Suppose he has *not* got the almanack—what then?"

"In that case," pursued the surgeon, "Francis Raven is innocent

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of all suspicion that there is a twenty-ninth day in February this year. As a necessary consequence—what will he do? He will anticipate the appearance of the Woman with the Knife at two in the morning on the twenty-ninth of February, instead of the first of March. Let him suffer all his superstitious terrors on the wrong day. Leave him, on the day that is really his birthday, to pass a perfectly quiet night, and to be as sound asleep as other people at two in the morning. And then, when he wakes comfortably in time for his breakfast, shame him out of his delusion by telling him the truth."

I agreed to try the experiment. Leaving the surgeon to caution Mrs. Fairbank on the subject of Leap Year, I went to the stables to see Francis Raven.

XV.

The poor fellow was full of forebodings of the fate in store for him on the ominous first of March. He eagerly entreated me to order one of the men-servants to sit up with him on the birthday morning. In granting his request, I asked him to tell me on which day of the week his birthday fell. He reckoned the days on his fingers; and proved his innocence of all suspicion that it was Leap Year by fixing on the twenty-ninth of February, in the full persuasion that it was the first of March. Pledged to try the surgeon's experiment, I left his error uncorrected, of course. In so doing, I took my first step blindfold towards the last act in the drama of the Ostler's Dream.

The next day brought with it a little domestic difficulty, which indirectly and strangely associated itself with the coming end.

My wife received a letter, inviting us to assist in celebrating the "Silver Wedding" of two worthy German neighbours of ours—Mr. and Mrs. Beldheimer. Mr. Beldheimer was a large wine-grower on the banks of the Moselle. His house was situated on the frontier line of France and Germany; and the distance from our house was sufficiently considerable to make it necessary for us to sleep under our host's roof. Under these circumstances, if we accepted the invitation, a comparison of dates showed that we should be away from home on the morning of the first of March. Mrs. Fairbank—holding to her absurd resolution to see with her own eyes what might, or might not, happen to Francis Raven on his birthday—flatly declined to leave Maison Rouge. "It's easy to send an excuse," she said, in her offhand manner.

I failed, for my part, to see any easy way out of the difficulty. The celebration of a "Silver Wedding" in Germany is the celebration of twenty-five years of happy married life; and the host's claim upon the consideration of his friends on such an occasion is something

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in the nature of a Royal "comamand." After considerable discussion, finding my wife's obstinacy invincible, and feeling that the absence of both of us from the festival would certainly offend our friends, I left Mrs. Fairbank to make her excuses for herself; and directed her to accept the invitation so far as I was concerned. In so doing, I took my second step, blindfold, towards the last act in the drama of the Ostler's Dream.

A week elapsed; the last days of February were at hand. Another domestic difficulty happened; and, again, this event also proved to be strangely associated with the coming end.

My head groom at the stables was one Joseph Rigobert. He was an ill-conditioned fellow, inordinately vain of his personal appearance, and by no means scrupulous in his conduct with women. His one virtue consisted in his fondness for horses, and in the care he took of the animals under his charge. In a word, he was too good a groom to be easily replaced, or he would have quitted my service long since. On the occasion of which I am now writing, he was reported to me by my steward as growing idle and disorderly in his habits. The principal offence alleged against him was, that he had been seen that day in the city of Metz, in the company of a woman (supposed to be an Englishwoman), whom he was entertaining at a tavern, when he ought to have been on his way back to Maison Rouge. The man's defence was that "the lady" (as he called her) was an English stranger, unacquainted with the ways of the place, and that he had only shown her where she could obtain some refreshment, at her own request. I administered the necessary reprimand—without troubling myself to inquire further into the matter. In failing to do this, I took my third step, blindfold, towards the last act in the drama of the Ostler's Dream.

On the evening of the twenty-eighth, I informed the servants at the stables that one of them must watch through the night by the Englishman's bedside. Joseph Rigobert immediately volunteered for the duty—as a means no doubt of winning his way back to my favour. I accepted his proposal.

That day, the surgeon dined with us. Towards midnight he and I left the smoking-room, and repaired to Francis Raven's bedside. Rigobert was at his post—with no very agreeable expression on his face. The Frenchman and the Englishman had evidently not got on well together, so far. Francis Raven lay helpless on his bed, waiting silently for two in the morning, and the Dream Woman.

"I have come, Francis, to bid you good-night," I said cheerfully. "To-morrow morning I shall look in at breakfast time, before I leave home on a journey."

"Thank you for all your kindness, sir. You will not see me alive

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to-morrow morning. She will find me this time. Mark my words—she will find me this time."

"My good fellow! she couldn't find you in England. How in the world is she to find you in France?"

"It's borne in on my mind, sir, that she will find me here. At two in the morning on my birthday I shall see her again, and see her for the last time."

"Do you mean that she will kill you?"

"I mean that, sir. She will kill me—with the knife."

"And with Rigobert in the room to protect you?"

"I am a doomed man. Fifty Rigoberts couldn't protect me."

"And yet you wanted somebody to sit up with you?"

"Mere weakness, sir. I don't like to be left alone on my death-bed."

I looked at the surgeon. If he had encouraged me, I should certainly, out of sheer compassion, have confessed to Francis Raven the trick that we were playing him. The surgeon held to his experiment; the surgeon's face plainly said—"No."

The next day (the twenty-ninth of February) was the day of the Silver Wedding. The first thing in the morning, I went to Francis Raven's room. Rigobert met me at the door.

"How has he passed the night?" I asked.

"Saying his prayers, and looking for ghosts," Rigobert answered. "A lunatic asylum is the only proper place for him."

I approached the bedside. "Well, Francis, here you are, safe and sound, in spite of what you said to me last night."

His eyes rested on mine with a vacant wondering look.

"I don't understand it," he said.

"Did you see anything of your wife when the clock struck two?"

"No, sir."

"Did anything happen?"

"Nothing happened, sir."

"Doesn't *this* satisfy you that you were wrong?"

His eyes still kept their vacant, wondering look. He only repeated the words he had spoken already:

"I don't understand it."

I made a last attempt to cheer him. "Come, come, Francis! keep a good heart. You will be out of bed in a fortnight."

He shook his head on the pillow. "There's something wrong," he said. "I don't expect you to believe me, sir. I only say, there's something wrong—and time will show it."

I left the room. Half an hour later I started for Mr. Beldheimer's house; leaving the arrangements for the morning of the first of March in the hands of the doctor and my wife.

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XVI.

THE one thing which principally struck me when I joined the guests at the Silver Wedding, is also the one thing which it is necessary to mention here. On this joyful occasion a noticeable lady present was out of spirits. That lady was no other than the heroine of the festival, the mistress of the house!

In the course of the evening I spoke to Mr. Beldheimer's eldest son on the subject of his mother. As an old friend of the family, I had a claim on his confidence which the young man willingly recognised.

"We have had a very disagreeable matter to deal with," he said; "and my mother has not recovered the painful impression left on her mind. Many years since, when my sisters were children, we had an English governess in the house. She left us, as we then understood, to be married. We heard no more of her until a week or ten days since—when my mother received a letter, in which our ex-governess described herself as being in a condition of great poverty and distress. After much hesitation she had ventured—at the suggestion of a lady who had been kind to her—to write to her former employers, and to appeal to their remembrance of old times. You know my mother: she is not only the most kindhearted, but the most innocent of women—it is impossible to persuade her of the wickedness that there is in the world. She replied by return of post, inviting the governess to come here and see her, and enclosing the money for her travelling expenses. When my father came home, and heard what had been done, he wrote at once to his agent in London to make inquiries—enclosing the address on the governess's letter. Before he could receive the agent's reply the governess arrived. She produced the worst possible impression on his mind. The agent's letter, reaching us a few days later, confirmed his suspicions. Since we had lost sight of her, the woman had led a most disreputable life. My father spoke to her privately: he offered—on condition of her leaving the house—a sum of money to take her back to England. If she refused, the alternative would be an appeal to the authorities and a public scandal. She accepted the money, and left the house. On her way back to England she appears to have stopped at Metz. You will understand what sort of woman she is, when I tell you that she was seen the other day in a tavern with your handsome groom, Joseph Rigobert."

While my informant was relating these circumstances, my memory was at work. I recalled what Francis Raven had vaguely told us of his wife's experience in former days, as governess in a German family. A suspicion of the truth suddenly flashed across my mind.

"What was the woman's name?" I asked.

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Mr. Beldheimer's son answered:

"Alicia Warlock."

I had but one idea when I heard that reply—to get back to my house without a moment's needless delay. It was then ten o'clock at night—the last train to Metz had left long since. I arranged with my young friend—after duly informing him of the circumstances—that I should go by the first train in the morning, instead of staying to breakfast with the other guests who slept in the house.

At intervals during the night I wondered uneasily how things were going on at Maison Rouge. Again and again, the same question occurred to me, on my journey home in the early morning—the morning of the first of March. As the event proved, but one person in my house knew what really happened at the stables, on Francis Raven's birthday. Let Joseph Rigobert take my place as narrator, and tell the story of the end to You—as he told it, in times past, to his lawyer and to Me.

FOURTH (AND LAST) NARRATIVE.

The Statement of Joseph Rigobert: addressed to the Barrister who defended him at his Trial.

Respected Sir,—On the twenty-seventh of February I was sent, on business connected with the stables at Maison Rouge, to the city of Metz. On the public promenade I met a magnificent woman. Complexion blonde. Nationality, English. We mutually admired each other; we fell into conversation. (She spoke French perfectly—with the English accent.) I offered refreshment; my proposal was accepted. We had a long and interesting interview—we discovered that we were made for each other. So far, who is to blame?

Is it my fault that I am a handsome man—universally agreeable as such to the fair sex? Is it a criminal offence to be accessible to the amiable weakness of love? I ask again, Who is to blame? Clearly, Nature. Not the beautiful lady—not my humble self.

To resume. The most hard-hearted person living will understand that two beings made for each other could not possibly part without an appointment to meet again.

I made arrangements for the accommodation of the lady in the village near Maison Rouge. She consented to honour me with her company at supper, in my apartment at the stables, on the night of the twenty-ninth. The time fixed on was the time when the other servants were accustomed to retire—eleven o'clock.

Among the grooms attached to the stables was an Englishman, laid up with a broken leg. His name was Francis. His manners were repulsive; he was ignorant of the French language. In the kitchen he went by the nick-name of "The English Bear." Strange to say,

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he was a great favourite with my master and my mistress. They even humoured certain superstitious terrors to which this repulsive person was subject—terrors into the nature of which I, as an advanced free-thinker, never thought it worth my while to inquire.

On the evening of the twenty-eighth, the Englishman, being a prey to the terrors which I have mentioned, requested that one of his fellow-servants might sit up with him for that night only. The wish that he expressed was backed by Mr. Fairbank's authority. Having already incurred my master's displeasure—in what way, a proper sense of my own dignity forbids me to relate—I volunteered to watch by the bedside of the English Bear. My object was to satisfy Mr. Fairbank that I bore no malice, on my side, after what had occurred between us. The wretched Englishman passed a night of delirium. Not understanding his barbarous language, I could only gather from his gestures that he was in deadly fear of some fancied apparition at his bedside. From time to time, when this madman disturbed my slumbers, I quieted him by swearing at him. This is the shortest and best way of dealing with persons in his condition.

On the morning of the twenty-ninth, Mr. Fairbank left us on a journey.

Later in the day, to my unspeakable disgust, I found that I had not done with the Englishman yet. In Mr. Fairbank's absence, Mrs. Fairbank took an incomprehensible interest in the question of my delirious fellow-servant's repose at night. Again, one or other of us was to watch by his bedside, and to report it, if anything happened. Expecting my fair friend to supper, it was necessary to make sure that the other servants at the stables would be safe in their beds that night. Accordingly, I volunteered once more to be the man who kept watch. Mrs. Fairbank complimented me on my humanity. I possess great command over my feelings. I accepted the compliment without a blush.

Twice, after nightfall, my mistress and the doctor (this last staying in the house, in Mr. Fairbank's absence) came to make inquiries. Once, *before* the arrival of my fair friend—and once *after*. On the second occasion (my apartment being next door to the Englishman's) I was obliged to hide my charming guest in the harness room. She consented, with angelic resignation, to immolate her dignity to the servile necessities of my position. A more amiable woman (so far) I never met with!

After the second visit I was left free. It was then close on midnight. Up to that time, there was nothing in the behaviour of the mad Englishman to reward Mrs. Fairbank and the doctor for presenting themselves at his bedside. He lay half awake, half asleep, with an odd wondering kind of look in his face. My mistress at parting warned me to be particularly watchful of him towards two in the

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morning. The doctor (in case anything happened) left me a large hand-bell to ring, which could easily be heard at the house.

Restored to the society of my fair friend, I spread the supper-table. A pâté, a sausage, and a few bottles of generous Moselle wine, composed our simple meal. When persons adore each other, the intoxicating illusion of Love transforms the simplest meal into a banquet. With immeasurable capacities for enjoyment, we sat down to table. At the very moment when I placed my fascinating companion in a chair—the infamous Englishman in the next room took that occasion of all others to become restless and noisy once more. He struck with his stick on the floor; he cried out in a delirious access of terror, "Rigobert! Rigobert!"

The sound of that lamentable voice, suddenly assailing our ears, terrified my fair friend. She lost all her charming colour in an instant. "Good heavens!" she exclaimed. "Who is that in the next room?"

"A mad Englishman."

"An Englishman?"

"Compose yourself, my angel. I will quiet him."

The lamentable voice called out on me again, "Rigobert! Rigobert!"

My fair friend caught me by the arm. "Who is he? What is his name?"

Something in her face struck me as she put that question. A spasm of jealousy shook me to the soul. "You know him?" I said.

"His name?" she vehemently repeated; "his name?"

"Francis," I answered.

"Francis—*what?*"

I shrugged my shoulders. I could neither remember nor pronounce the barbarous English surname. I could only tell her it began with an "R."

She dropped back into the chair. Was she going to faint? No; she recovered, and more than recovered, her lost colour. Her eyes flashed superbly. What did it mean? Profoundly as I understand women in general, I was puzzled by *this* woman!

"You know him?" I repeated.

She laughed at me. "What nonsense! How should I know him? Go and quiet the wretch."

My looking-glass was near. One glance at it satisfied me that no woman in her senses could prefer the Englishman to Me. I recovered my self-respect. I hastened to the Englishman's bedside.

The moment I appeared he pointed eagerly towards my room. He overwhelmed me with a torrent of words in his own language. I made out, from his gestures and his looks, that he had, in some incomprehensible manner, discovered the presence of my guest—and, stranger still, that he was scared by the idea of a person in my room.

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I endeavoured to compose him on the system which I have already mentioned—that is to say, I swore at him in *my* language. The result not proving satisfactory, I shook my fist in his face—and left the bedchamber.

Returning to my fair friend, I found her walking backwards and forwards in a state of excitement wonderful to behold. She had not waited for me to fill her glass—she had begun the generous Moselle in my absence. I prevailed on her with difficulty to place herself at the table. Nothing would induce her to eat. "My appetite is gone," she said. "Give me wine."

The generous Moselle deserves its name—delicate on the palate, with prodigious "body." The strength of this fine wine produced no stupefying effect on my remarkable guest. It appeared to strengthen and exhilarate her—nothing more. She always spoke in the same low tone, and always, turn the conversation as I might, brought it back with the same dexterity to the subject of the Englishman in the next room. In any other woman this persistency would have offended me. My lovely guest was irresistible; I answered her questions with the docility of a child. She possessed all the amusing eccentricity of her nation. When I told her of the accident which confined the Englishman to his bed, she sprang to her feet. An extraordinary smile irradiated her countenance. She said, "Show me the horse who broke his leg! I must, and will, see the horse!" I took her down to the stables. She kissed the horse—on my word of honour, she kissed the horse! That struck me. I said, "You *do* know the man; and he has wronged you in some way." No! she would not admit it, even then. "I kiss all beautiful animals," she said. "Hav'n't I kissed *you?*" With that charming explanation of her conduct, she ran back up the stairs. I only remained behind to lock the stable door again. When I rejoined her, I made a startling discovery. I caught her coming out of the Englishman's room.

"I was just going down stairs again to call you," she said. "The man in there is getting noisy once more."

The mad Englishman's voice assailed our ears again.

"Rigobert! Rigobert!"

He was a frightful object to look at when I saw him this time. His eyes were staring wildly; the perspiration was pouring over his face. In a panic of terror he clasped his hands; he pointed up to Heaven. By every sign and gesture that a man can make, he entreated me not to leave him again. I really could not help smiling. The idea of my staying with *him*, and leaving my fair friend by herself in the next room!

I turned to the door. When the mad wretch saw me leaving him he burst out into a screech of despair—so shrill that I feared it might awaken the sleeping servants.

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My presence of mind in emergencies is proverbial among those who know me. I tore open the cupboard in which he kept his linen—seized a handful of his handkerchiefs—gagged him with one of them, and secured his hands with the others. There was now no danger of his alarming the servants. After tying the last knot, I looked up.

The door between the Englishman's room and mine was open. My fair friend was standing on the threshold—watching *him* as he lay helpless on the bed; watching *me* as I tied the last knot.

"What are you doing there?" I asked. "Why did you open the door?"

She stepped up to me, and whispered her answer in my ear—with her eyes all the time upon the man on the bed.

"I heard him scream."

"Well?"

"I thought you had killed him."

I drew back from her in horror. The suspicion of me which her words implied, was sufficiently detestable in itself. But her manner when she uttered the words was more revolting still. It so powerfully affected me that I started back from that beautiful creature, as I might have recoiled from a reptile crawling over my flesh.

Before I had recovered myself sufficiently to reply, my nerves were assailed by another shock. I suddenly heard my mistress's voice, calling to me from the stable-yard.

There was no time to think—there was only time to act. The one thing needful was to keep Mrs. Fairbank from ascending the stairs, and discovering—not my lady guest only—but the Englishman also, gagged and bound, on his bed. I instantly hurried to the yard. As I ran down the stairs I heard the stable-clock strike the quarter to two in the morning.

My mistress was eager and agitated. The doctor (in attendance on her) was smiling to himself, like a man amused at his own thoughts.

"Is Francis awake or asleep?" Mrs. Fairbank inquired.

"He has been a little restless, madam. But he is now quiet again. If he is not disturbed" (I added these words to prevent her from ascending the stairs), "he will soon fall off into a quiet sleep."

"Has nothing happened since I was here last?"

"Nothing, madam."

The doctor lifted his eyebrows with a comical look of distress.

"Alas, alas, Mrs. Fairbank!" he said. "Nothing has happened! The days of romance are over!"

"It is not two o'clock yet," my mistress answered, a little irritably.

The smell of the stables was strong on the morning air. She put her handkerchief to her nose and led the way out of the yard, by the north entrance—the entrance communicating with the gardens and

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the house. I was ordered to follow her, along with the doctor. Once out of the smell of the stables, she began to question me again. She was unwilling to believe that nothing had occurred in her absence. I invented the best answers I could think of on the spur of the moment; and the doctor stood by, laughing. So the minutes passed, till the clock struck two. Upon that, Mrs. Fairbank announced her intention of personally visiting the Englishman in his room. To my great relief, the doctor interfered to stop her from doing this.

"You have heard that Francis is just falling asleep," he said. "If you enter his room you may disturb him. It is essential to the success of my experiment that he should have a good night's rest, and that he should own it himself, before I tell him the truth. I must request, medically, madam, that you will not disturb the man."

My mistress was unwilling to yield. For the next five minutes at least, there was a warm discussion between the two. In the end, Mrs. Fairbank was obliged to give way—for the time. "In half an hour," she said, "Francis will either be sound asleep, or awake again. In half an hour, I shall come back." She took the doctor's arm. They returned together to the house.

Left by myself, with half an hour before me, I resolved to take the Englishwoman back to the village—then, returning to the stables, to remove the gag and the bindings from Francis, and to let him screech to his heart's content. What would his alarming the whole establishment matter to *me*—after I had got rid of the compromising presence of my guest?

Returning to the yard, I heard a sound like the creaking of an open door on its hinges. The gate of the north entrance I had just closed with my own hand. I went round to the west entrance at the back of the stables. It opened on a field crossed by two footpaths, in Mr. Fairbank's grounds. The nearest footpath led to the village. The other led to the high road and the river.

Arriving at the west entrance, I found the door open—swinging to and fro slowly in the fresh morning breeze. I had myself locked and bolted that door after admitting my fair friend at eleven o'clock. A vague dread of something wrong stole its way into my mind. I hurried back to the stables.

I looked into my own room. It was empty. I went to the harness-room. Not a sign of the woman was there. I returned to my room, and approached the door of the Englishman's bed-chamber. Was it possible that she had remained there during my absence? An unaccountable reluctance to open the door made me hesitate, with my hand on the lock. I listened. There was not a sound inside. I called softly. There was no answer. I drew back a step, still hesitating. I noticed something dark, moving slowly in the crevice between the bottom of the door and the boarded floor. Snatching up the candle

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from the table, I held it low, and looked. The dark slowly-moving object was a stream of blood!

That horrid sight roused me. I opened the door.

The Englishman lay on his bed—alone in the room. He was stabbed in two places—in the throat and in the heart. The weapon was left in the second wound. It was a knife of English manufacture, with a handle of buckhorn as good as new.

I instantly gave the alarm. Witnesses can speak to what followed. It is monstrous to suppose that I am guilty of the murder. I admit that I am capable of committing follies—but I shrink from the bare idea of a crime. Besides, I had no motive for killing the man. The woman murdered him, in my absence. The woman escaped by the west entrance while I was talking to my mistress. I have no more to say. I swear to you what I have here written is a true statement of all that happened on the morning of the first of March.

Accept, sir, the assurance of my sentiments of profound gratitude and respect.

JOSEPH RIGOBERT.

LAST LINES.

ADDED BY PERCY FAIRBANK.

TRIED for the murder of Francis Raven, Joseph Rigobert was found Not Guilty; the papers of the assassinated man presenting ample evidence of the deadly animosity felt towards him by his wife.

The investigations pursued on the morning when the crime was committed showed that the murderess, after leaving the stable, had taken the footpath which led to the river. The river was dragged—without result. It remains doubtful to this day whether she died by drowning or not. The one thing certain is—that Alicia Warlock was never seen again.

So—beginning in mystery, ending in mystery—the Dream Woman passes from your view. Ghost; demon; or living human creature—say for yourselves which she is. Or, knowing what unfathomed wonders are around you, what unfathomed wonders are *in* you, let the wise words of the greatest of all poets be explanation enough:

> "We are such stuff
> As dreams are made of, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep."

THE END.

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TEMPLE BAR.

JANUARY 1875.

Leah: a Woman of Fashion.

By MRS. EDWARDES,

Author of 'Ought We to Visit Her?' 'Archie Lovell,' &c.

Chapter VIII.

A DANCE OF DEATH.

A PAINTER'S eye would, probably, be caught by the lights and shadows, the colouring, the artistic humour of the group; a preacher might sigh over its morality. Danton regards it from a widely different standpoint to that either of art or sentiment, and arrives at his diagnosis quickly—diagnosis of the dissecting-room rather than the pulpit.

I have spoken before of Leah's complexion, clearly pale to singularity, but stained by every passing emotion, every gust of temper, with a hue at once too vermeil and too evanescent for perfect health. She is colourless as any marble at this moment, lividly white about the mouth and lips, and all the time with a flush like day-dawn upon either cheek. Her breast heaves unevenly. As she turns, amidst jests and laughter, with that matchless grace of hers, from friend to lover, from lover to friend, you can detect, if your ear be a trained one, the curious, hoarse unevenness of her voice. Poor materials for a career of fashion, these; an organisation wrongly strung for the wear and tear of fast London life, the heats, chills, tight-lacing, insufficient clothing, carbonic acid, sleepless nights, and hard-worked days that the foremost rank in the most advanced of all civilisations has to endure!

And Jack Chamberlayne, what of him? For Danton is at no loss to identify yonder painted travestied figure as Leah's lover: has not Désiré pantomimed for his benefit, with all the verve and malice

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of a Paris gamin, the refined little saturnalia going on in Madame's drawing-room? Jack Chamberlayne's haggard cheeks flame under their mask of rouge: a fire the reverse of holy is in his boyish blue eyes. His thin, nerveless hands are all a-tremble as, with comical airs and affectations befitting his assumed character, he alternately fans himself and his betrothed, who shrinks from the contact of his breath, and so draws closer to Lord Stair. Suddenly Jack coughs—a short, little rasping cough, that makes him raise his handkerchief to his lips; and Danton can reckon the length of the poor lad's tether pretty nearly as accurately as he computed that of any far-gone hectic patient beside whose hospital stretcher he stood to-day.

So much for the physical outlook of these two people (Colonel Pascal's April daisies) who are to be bone of one bone, flesh of one flesh, bound together for happiness or for misery, like living nerves in the same body, till death them shall part!

And the marriage, muses Danton within himself, is what good people call a suitable one. Oh, eternal, inscrutable enigma—"the folly and stupidity of the good!" A fortune, if the bridegroom last long enough to inherit it, for a penniless girl; a handsome wife for a man who has—shall we say, who has lived a *little* fast, and needs the reclaiming influence of sweet fireside affection? If the opinion of science were occasionally asked, in addition to that of exultant chaperons, milliners, lawyers, clerks, and clergy, as to prospects matrimonial. . . . . Well, the opinion of science is never asked, and he, Eugene Danton, has no more to do with Leah Pascal and Jack Chamberlayne than with any other pair of doomed lovers in that Dance of Death called life, amidst which a surgeon, with open eyes and sealed lips, threads his way perpetually.

Hastily extinguishing his candle, he moves aside from the blaze of gaslight that issues through the drawing-room door, and has already advanced as far as the second flight of stairs, when little Deb spies him; Deb, whose infirmities hinder her from dancing like the rest, and who, sitting alone in a corner, is just beginning to realise that being swathed in a hot scarlet dressing-gown, and having one's eyes filled with cork-dust—yes, and even wearing a pair of twisted paper horns, to look like the devil—does not constitute such very ambrosial enjoyment, after all.

She rushes forward to the doorway, flies after Danton, and gets tight possession of his hand. "We are having the most lovely party, Monsieur Danton! Come in and see Madame's salon; 'tis like the theatre at Christmas. There's Naomi in papa's clothes and a chimney-pot, and Jack dressed like a chambermaid, in one of Rose's caps; and Jack has been dancing with Mrs. Amiral Tom-son, and some day I will tell you an adventure I saw in the back drawing-room, and I had two wine-glasses of champagne at my dinner; and this is only

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my make-up, of course. *I am wearing,*" says Deb, grandly, "a white muslin dress made with five little flounces and a panier, and I have satin slippers, Monsieur Danton, and a new rose-coloured sash."

She leads, drags him, whether he will or not, into the drawing-room; and Leah, burning with confusion, finds herself forced to introduce Danton to her lover—the painted, noisy, not-three-parts sober harlequin at her side—her lover!

"Danton!" cries Jack, at no time very clear on subjects connected with literature, and trebly hazy on all matters just at present, "why, that's the name of the poet laureate, isn't it?—fellow who writes idylls about heaven and hell, and that—or was it the French Revolution, Leah? You left school later than I did. Glad to make your acquaintance, anyhow, Mossou. You must come and stay with us in London; introduce you to all the literary swells, if you care for them; I don't. Introduce you to all the pretty actresses, if you care for them; I do. Have a glass of champagne?"

He claps his hand, with tipsy familiarity, on "Mossou's" shoulder, then, half pushing him along, half clinging to him to preserve his own equilibrium, manages to reach the table, where stand the champagne bottles and glasses. He pours out a bumper for Danton; he drains down half a tumbler full himself; begins to grow confidential.

"It's not often I take to a fellow at first sight, and, as a rule, I can't abide foreigners at all; but," looking at Danton as he speaks with glistening, solemn eyes, "I've taken a fancy to you; by George I have! Bit of a physiognomist—believe in physiognomy; first-rate judge of character, I am. Now look," lowering his voice and touching Danton with his elbow; "you see that old curmudgeon, that old Shylock, my future papa, over there?—tell me what's written on every line of his face, eh? I am to be married to the daughter next week, you know. Italy for the winter. Not by any means sure I shall live through the winter. They must run their chance of that. . . . . Take me as I am, without settlements, or not at all. Have some more champagne?—oh, you needn't be afraid, it's honest wine, and I shall be made to pay for it, somehow. I always feel I shall be made to pay for everything in this house. Danton," in a whisper, "you are a right-down good fellow! Hang it all! a man can't help being born a foreigner, and I don't mind what I say to you. They are a regular set of sharpers here, sir, from Lord Stair downwards."

He puts his hand under Danton's arm, and staggers away with him to the farther end of the back drawing-room, out of hearing of everybody; Leah, with a sense of shame almost beyond her power of endurance, looking on. She is keen enough to guess what kind of confidence Jack, in his present state, will make—could divine it, even were his glances in the direction of her father and herself less significant;

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and every expression, every smile that steals across Danton's face costs her vanity a smart. She does not love Colonel Pascal enough to blush for him. She certainly does not love Jack Chamberlayne enough to blush for *him*. Her shame is for herself. She desires to stand on a pedestal in Danton's sight; gives him credit—strange to say, when one considers her shallowness of insight—for being a man of "ideals," a visionary who would entertain all sorts of absurd little chivalric notions about women, and the exalted position women should hold. And she has sunk to this already! Before Danton has known her two days, he must pity, to the full as much as he despises her.

"Leah, my love," says her father, with grating suavity, in her ear, "don't you think some music—not dance music, this time—would be agreeable before our little party breaks up?" Under Colonel Pascal's direction, Désiré is rapidly clearing away the wine and glasses, with strictest whispered injunctions to bring no more. "Monsieur—eh—ah—Danton plays, I rather think. Suppose we request him to favour us?"

"Monsieur—eh—ah—Danton is so charmingly engaged already, papa," answers Leah. "It would be a pity, surely, to break in on such an intellectual treat as Monsieur Danton must be enjoying!"

However, she quits her partner's arm—she has forgotten to relinquish it ever since the conclusion of the waltz—and, with her face held high in the air, walks slowly across the room ("Where could old Pascal's daughter have learnt to cross a room with such a grace?" thinks Lord Stair) to Danton and her lover.

Jack having cleared his conscience of much perilous stuff on the score of well-fleeced bridegrooms generally, himself, his loans, his gifts, and the rapacity of the Pascal family in particular—"For Leah is her father, down to the ground, sir! A handsome girl, when she is in a good temper, and a figure—by Jove, I am sweet on the girl, I know! I would go through fire and water to marry her; but come to money, and the blood shows"—Jack, I say, having relieved his conscience on these, and several other vital subjects, is fast lapsing towards the melancholy or contemplative stage of intoxication. With his droll little dutch-doll face on one side, his eyes glassy and solemn, his smart muslin cap twisted awry, and his feet perched on a neighbouring chair to the level of his knees, he certainly looks about the most grotesque antidote to love that woman's soul could conceive of, as his mistress approaches.

"Don't you think you have been amusing enough for one night, Mr. Chamberlayne?" says Leah, cruelly. "I have sent the children upstairs. I have told the children to make themselves Human again. Don't you think it is nearly time for you to appear clothed and in your right mind also?"

And she sinks down, her yellow draperies fluttering around her

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like the wings of a butterfly, upon a low ottoman at Jack Chamberlayne's side.

"If you knew how painfully foolish we have all been this evening, Monsieur Danton," glancing at Danton across her lover; "foolish, alas! without either wit or merriment, you would congratulate yourself, I am sure, upon your good sense in having stayed away."

"I know I wish I had stayed away," cries Jack, candid if not gallant. "Black suit and choker—hate black suits and chokers! Worse dinner than you get at home: wine served in thimblefuls; and turned into the street at midnight!" Coherence and vowels are slipping out of Jack's speech fast; his words trip each other up ominously. "What's a man to do who's turned into the street—midnight—black suit and choker?"

The problem is evidently one of interest to him. As he works it out mentally, his eyes fixed owlishly on nothingness, his knuckles playing feeble fantasies on his chin, Leah manages to exchange one sentence with Danton.

"Don't . . . . please, think worse of me than you can help," she whispers—oh, with what a quiver of the lip!

"If I am wise, I shall endeavour not to think of you at all," is Danton's answer.

Nothing more. Yet both feel that they have spoken their first words of love.

Up fusses Colonel Pascal, pointing out his toes in their patent shoes, with icily polite bow to Danton—not unreasonably anxious, perhaps, as to the chances of his future son-in-law falling down insensible at his fiancée's feet.

"You have asked Monsieur Danton to favour us, Leah?" Colonel Pascal never loses a chance of calling Danton "Monsieur." "A little music before we break up—ah! We are all familiar with Monsieur Danton's charming talent"——

"Play for us, will you?" interrupts Leah, raising her eyes, a sudden light in their yellow depths, to Danton's. "We have been having noise enough, and to spare, this evening. A few notes of music will do us good."

Danton looks Colonel Pascal coolly and silently in the face. He obeys Leah on the instant. She follows him to the instrument.

"Am I to play for you, or for your father—I mean for the audience generally, Miss Pascal?"

"Oh, for the audience first!" answers Leah, with a blush. She has not three notes of music in her composition, but this only makes his question more flatteringly sweet to vanity. "You know the sort of showy things such an audience can appreciate, and then you will play something for me—me alone!"

Danton is a real musician. His father, a Florentine of noble birth,

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trod the boards from predilection—it was his famous *Raoul* in the Huguenots that won the heart of the shy young English girl, Danton's mother—and the son has inherited not a little of his genius. Waltzes, galops, mazurkas, "the sort of showy things such an audience can appreciate"—his fine taste and touch render even these artistic. Lord Stair saunters across the room and stands beside the piano; well-bred, attentive, contemptuous. Colonel Pascal, through his double eye-glass, watches the performance somewhat as one would watch a street boy with a hurdy-gurdy and white mice. The old ladies from the front drawing-room call out, "Very pretty indeed; thank you *so* much," at intervals. Jack Chamberlayne——

Jack Chamberlayne falls asleep, and is not improved by the condition; few human beings, out of pictures, are. His mouth opens, his jaw droops, his head falls; he gives all sorts of impossible jerks and snorts every time that he recovers himself. Leah feels—the force of contrast, perhaps—that he was never so repulsive, so absolutely hideous to her as at this moment! At last he fairly rolls from the sofa. Colonel Pascal, hastily advancing to the rescue, suggests that his dear young friend had better change his dress; "tight-lacing does not agree with you, Chamberlayne—a little feminine faintness, eh?" but contrives to get speedily away with him out of the room. Lord Stair, upon this, glances at his watch and suppresses a yawn or two; then, with his accustomed "happy knack of irrelevance," that great fundamental art of all men and women of the world, makes a sudden retreat to the front drawing-room and the society of the old ladies; and Leah and Danton are alone.

"And now you are going to play for me without an audience?" she asks, leaning so that her voice shall be heard by no ear save his.

("I wonder whether Miss Pascal knows the unfortunate, I may say the culpable, history attached to the young man, Danton?" whispers old Mrs. Pettingall, mysteriously, to Mrs. Tom-son.

"If things go on like this, it will be some one's dooty to acquaint her of it," says Mrs. Tom-son, with after-dinner severity.)

"Yes, I will play for you, if you are sure you have not had music enough already."

"Enough? I am never tired. I could listen to real music for hours and hours." Leah's yawns at a concert are piteous to witness. In the finest parts of an opera she will examine the pattern of the prima donna's sleeve, or the quality of her lace trimmings, or a head-dress in the stalls, neither listening nor pretending to listen to a solitary note of the performance. "If you only knew the treat music is to me!"

So Danton plays for her a sonata of Mozart's, and plays it gloriously. As he proceeds, the snowy breast heaves, the golden-brown eyes suffuse; she is moved quite beyond the capacity of thanking him by

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the time he finishes. That is the way, reader, when a woman chances to possess a pair of luminous eyes, a handsome mouth or brow. A strain of music, a picture, a poem, altogether beyond her comprehension—with a lover, actual or in posse, standing by—can kindle her into the expression of so much more emotion than she feels! Poor plain Miss Smith, sitting unnoticed in a corner, her hands stiffly folded in their benzined gloves, her insignificant grey eyes fixed and tearless—Miss Smith in her soul, I have no doubt, understands and feels the great master's thoughts a thousand times better than lovely Leah Pascal.

But the suffused soft eyes, the heaving white breast, effect their work of subjugation only too quickly. Danton is tolerably on his guard, as a man, against every crafty weapon that a coquette can wield. As an artist, he is weak . . . . as an artist! Leah sees this at a glance, and treasures up the newly-acquired experience for future use.

"I dare not ask for another piece now, Monsieur Danton, or for a song, as I should like. They are making such a noise, it would be an insult to Art to ask for more; but some other day, to-morrow, if you could find time, and when the house is quiet. You will not refuse? Music is the best of all medicines, I think, when one's spirit is sick."

"Medicine? I should say few spirits have less need of healing than Miss Pascal's at the present time," says Danton, as he rises from the instrument.

"Yes, that is just the way people judge each other," is Leah's answer. "If we could all know the truth!"——

These are the last words they exchange to-night. Jack Chamberlayne has now returned, clothed, if not in his right mind, to the drawing-room, with Naomi and little Deb, again in the stiff white muslins and silk sashes. The two poor gentlemen, who have really enjoyed their entertainment, six glasses of champagne, better than they anticipated, are exchanging valedictory compliments with their host. Ten minutes later, the whole party has broken up; and Jack and Leah—who shall say how these things happen?—find themselves alone in a small vestibule, or cloak room, halfway down the staircase; Leah bright with smiles, Jack sulkily drawing on his great coat, and with a cheroot, unlit, between his teeth.

The storm connubial (I use the term prophetically) lowers on Mr. Chamberlayne's brow, and Leah's guilty conscience is at no loss to account for his displeasure. She is really sorry for him, poor fellow!—is jealousy in a lover a crime that a woman ever finds it impossible to forgive?—helps him on with his coat affectionately—alas! his weak hands need assistance—gives him his cane, his gloves.

"And are you really, really sure it is wise to walk, Jack, dear?

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Now mind you button your coat well up over your chest. I must see about getting you one of those nice Canadian clouds—the evenings are growing so chill. I should not wonder a bit if we have a frost to-night."

"A deuced deal you care about my chest, don't you?" is Mr. Chamberlayne's gracious reply. "Oh, none of that, thank you," Leah is actually offering to pin his cravat round his throat; "and if you dislike the smell of smoke, you had better return to the drawing-room. I am going to light up."

"Jack! *me* mind the smell of smoke," cries Leah, devoted, if not grammatical; "when you know that I mean to let you smoke everywhere, and always! Why, what is the matter?" putting her face within about two inches of his. "You don't mean to say that you are cross with me again, do you?"

The tone in which she asks this is perfect; caressing, repentant, conciliatory, ignorant of offence, everything a man in love could desire the tone of his adored one to be. Yet it happens that the heart of this particular lover is not reached. Men possessing the bluntest order of intellect have keen intuitions sometimes, the keener, perhaps, from their very lack of reasoning power. Jack Chamberlayne, with all his dullness, knows that Leah is acting, just as well as Leah knows it herself.

"I think, when I am present," he breaks out abruptly, and, to Leah's astonishment, soberly, scarcely a trace of champagne left in voice or manner, "when I am present, you might have the good taste to behave yourself decently."

"Jack!"

"I have never looked upon you as better than other people, and I know, cursed well, what awaits me by-and-by. All I ask is, don't disgrace me when I am present. You will do as you like, of course, when I am away; but don't make a fool of yourself, and of me, too, under my very nose, as you did to-night."

Surprise, indignation, pity—the semblance of a tear! Leah goes through the little stock repertory of injured innocence; but without marked success.

"Not know!—you know what I mean just as well as I do!" he persists. "Your conduct with that man is shameful. When you are married, I have no doubt you will be—like other married women," growls Jack, between his teeth; "but as an engaged girl, just for three or four days longer you might try to exist without a flirtation, above all, with such a man as Lord Stair."

"Lord Stair! Oh, Jack, dear, you delicious creature!—you mean Lord Stair?"

"Whom the devil should I mean, else!" is the delicious creature's reply. "If there was another man in the house, besides toothless

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old dotards of ninety, I have not the smallest doubt you would angle for *him* as well."

He simply ignores Danton's existence. A penniless foreign fellow, who can jingle the piano, give dancing lessons, perhaps, or write books—why Leah would as soon think of Désiré as of Danton. If Jack had been married a dozen years, he could hardly be more exquisitely unsuspicious of the truth.

"Lord Stair! I flirt with him! You jealous of him! This is too much. Why, look at his age, his ugliness!"

"His age, his ugliness, did not keep Lady Arabella Reid from bolting with him, did they?"

"Please don't make me answerable for Lady Arabella Anybody's sins. *I* have no intention of bolting with Lord Stair, if you mean that."

"No, I know you have not; you are a vast deal too good a judge to do anything of the sort. It is not always the worst women who bolt."

"Then, would you mind saying what you do mean, Jack? I hate quarrelling, as you know, dear; let us have the whole grievance out, and make it up."

"I mean—that you let Lord Stair say things to you he ought not to say, if you will have it."

"And how in the world can you tell what Lord Stair says to me?"

"Because I know, everybody knows, the things he says to all women. Do you think I have not watched him—yes, and you, too, when you are together? And he is with you too much; he is with you morning, noon, and night, and, by ——, I won't have it any longer! That's what I mean."

Leah brings her face exactly to the level of her lover's; she looks, with unflinching steadiness, into his eyes. "Jack, my friend, are you fool enough to think that I—*I* am flirting, as you call it, with Lord Stair?"

"A deuced good imitation of flirting," answers Jack, surly, yet half appeased. The truth of what she says (veiling that other truth he dreams not of) has made itself felt. "You don't care for him, I dare say. Doubtful," poor Jack! "if you could care seriously for any man; but you are flattered by his attentions, and you show him that you are. Lord Stair would not waste his time in running after any woman unless she encouraged him."

"And if I do—if I do make myself civil and pleasant to a man old enough to be the grandfather of us both, what is my object? I am ambitious, I know. When have I tried to hide any of my faults from you? I mean to make my way in the London world; your way, too, Jack, and Lord Stair is just the one person who can help me"——

"Lord Stair and Bell Baltimore," interrupts Jack. "Well, you

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will be well launched, in all conscience! The most disreputable man, the most disreputable woman in London for your sponsors."

Leah reddens, but keeps her temper admirably. Nothing like an overburdened conscience for enabling one to hold one's angry passions in check.

"Bell may be disreputable—I am afraid she is, rather—but, for all that, you were more than half in love with her, sir. If there had been no Mr. Baltimore in the world, I am quite sure you would have proposed to Bell, not me."

"If there had been no Mr. Baltimore," says Jack coolly, "I am quite sure Bell would have proposed to me for herself, instead of "——

"Don't hesitate, pray—instead of for her friend. It was our side, really, who made the offer, was it not, Jack? You did not follow us wherever we went; you were not jealous of every other man who looked at us; you tolerated our attentions simply! And then, one fine day, Bell hinted to you that my peace of mind was wrecked through your fascinations, and you consented, out of pity, to marry me. That was it, was it not?"

She holds her lovely face, soft with smiles, up to his, and Jack Chamberlayne takes her in his arms and kisses her, the quarrel ending precisely as so many of their quarrels have ended before. . . .

And still the reconciliation is but skin-deep, kiss-deep. Before the house door has closed upon him, Jack Chamberlayne knows that he has been befooled. The very second Leah finds herself alone, her heart gives a great leap of joy.

That kiss—well, 'twas nauseous, but it bought peace. And to-morrow, and to-morrow, and every rosy-hued morrow, until liberty be taken from her for ever, she and Danton will meet.

Chapter IX.

SI TU SAVAIS.

And to-morrow, when it comes, is to-day, rosy-hued no longer. Work-girls with unfinished fineries—no ordering a trousseau from Roger or Vignon for a daughter of Colonel Pascal's: Leah has had to buy every item of her dress in the cheapest possible market, has had to hunt up the smallest milliners from the most unfashionable quarters—work-girls with unfinished fineries; the great washing-bill question fought out in detail between Naomi and her father; the half-cold twelve-o'clock breakfast, dawdled over at Lord Stair's side; the afternoon drive and love-making in the Bois; the theatre in the evening, Jack Chamberlayne and Lord Stair both in attendance. . . . and not a glimpse of Danton. The next day, the same routine again, and the next. Then comes Sunday, October the 15th; three more days she starts

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for the Italian Lakes, in the society of Mr. Chamberlayne; and still she sees him not!

Fate, however, perversely propitious, ordains that Sunday, the 15th, shall amply make up for the wasted week-days—through Deb's agency. Ailing at all times, poor Deb is subject periodically to attacks of the most intense headache—attacks that doctors and doctors' stuff are powerless to avert, and during the continuance of which her only solace is to lie in Leah's arms, and moan or shriek, according to the violence of her suffering. Colonel Pascal makes it a rule to walk straight out of the house the moment any member of his family is taken ill, his sensibilities being altogether of two fine a texture for rough every-day use. Naomi is just a little worse than useless. If the contemplation of a face, perfect and cold as a tinted statue, could alleviate pain, Naomi would possibly not refuse her services, for half an hour or so, in the sick room. It happens, however, that the mere sight of this "thing of beauty" drives the poor small patient to distraction. Deb wants the pressure of a cool hand on her forehead, wants her temples bathed, wants loving patient arms to uphold her; in a word, wants Leah, and has her exclusively. If Leah were ready equipped in plumes and train for a first court presentation, an attendant admiring viscount on either side, I verily believe one of Deb's headaches would have power to restrain her from going.

Unhappily, our virtues—her love for Deb may be reckoned as Leah's one virtue—snare us to the full as effectually as our sins. On the night succeeding Colonel Pascal's dinner-party, Danton, with a self-control not very frequently shown by men in such cases, resolved deliberately to strangle his liking for Colonel Pascal's daughter, while yet it remained a liking. It was love for a woman of her type that wrecked his life at one-and-twenty. Surely he has wisdom enough to steer clear of such a peril now. He will see the girl, put himself within the reach of her coquetry no more, keep away from the house, if need be, every day until her wedding, then—drink healths, throw old shoes with the rest (suffer a pang, perhaps, when he gets a last glance from those eyes of hers at Jack Chamberlayne's side), and forget her, or, at least, think of her only as a moneyless man may do of a picture, racehorse, or any other object of luxury too dear for his possessing. So Danton resolved, and, carrying out his resolution, has not once encountered Leah during the past two days. To-day, Sunday, he means to go down to some artist friends at Fontainebleau, and take an eight-and-forty hours' holiday, thus further putting the possibility of temptation out of his path.

. . . . Well, mid-day breakfast is over. Danton's train starts at two; there is barely time for him to run up to his room, write a letter, and be off—out of harm's way and into the good October weather, the crisp, fresh forests, and the anti-sentimental society of his artist

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friends, till Tuesday. He sings, for the man is really heart-whole yet, the old refrain, "Oh, ma maîtresse!" He is just hurrying by a door he dreads, and yet which he can never pass without a certain hope of seeing it unclose, when Debbie's voice, weak and querulous, arrests him. Debbie's voice, and then another, sweet and low as any that ever wept beside the waters of Babylon—the voice of Leah.

Deb's attack has now passed from paroxysms of sharp pain to the stage at which she demands amusement: constant stories, told in the softest of undertones, short, vivid, dramatic, new; that is the grand essential for poor Deb—*new*. And Leah is curiously unimaginative. Bright in conversation, quick at appreciating and reproducing the thoughts of others, she is absolutely devoid by nature of the faculty of invention. But what will not love do? In the intervals between Deb's illnesses—this is truth, Reader; it does me good to write it—Leah searches every newspaper she comes across for scraps of such literature as the child affects, and gets them patiently by heart for future use. You shall judge what kind of literature this is.

"Tell me something new," says Deb wearily, Danton listening the while. "Something of my sort—theatres or wild beasts killing any one, or like that."

"Well, Debbie, you know about the tiger"——

"Who ate the boy in the City Road? I've heard it scores of times. You never know anything new, now," says poor Debbie impatiently. "Before you were engaged, you used to tell lots of nice things, but now"——

"Debbie, you have not heard about the famous clown who is acting in London. When I am married, you shall come and stay with me, and we will go together—only you and me—to see him."

"Oh, I've seen the clown so often," says Deb, fretfully still, but with awakening interest in her tired voice.

"Not this one. Why, Debbie, hear what he does." And now Leah falls back upon her lesson, learnt from the advertisement in the "Times." "'Amidst the breathless excitement of all present, this clown of clowns takes the incredible leap of thirty-five feet'—double the length of Madame's drawing-room, Deb—'across the arena. This single feat worth double the entrance money. His legs alone a study.'"

Being, as I have said, unimaginative, Leah stops dead short the moment her lesson is repeated. But Deb can happily supply any deficiencies to her own satisfaction. Deb is overflowing with imagination, and with those big eyes of hers sees into the unseen in a manner the grown-up men and women who surround her wot not of.

"'His legs alone a study,'" she repeats, after lying quiet for a minute or two. "Mustn't that be grand, Leah? Double the length

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of Madame's drawing-room. . . . Ah, I see it all! One, two—he is off!" Stretching up her little thin arms in the air. "He flies—no, he falls—no, it's nothing. Oh, Leah, how frightened I was! Just feel; I have turned all wet and cold with fright."

"Well, don't think about the clown any more," says Leah, laying her hand soothingly on the child's forehead. "We will talk about the clown when you are stronger. Do you know that your bridesmaid's dress came home last night, Debbie? Cerise and white, and a long, long tulle veil to your feet."

No answer at once; then, "I wish some one would die between this and the wedding," says Deb. "Any one, I don't care who, as long as it was not you."

"Or you," says Leah quickly, and, stooping over, kisses her.

The door stands a-jar; and Danton, by this time, has moved into such a position that he can not only hear her voice, but watch her face.

"As well die as live alone with papa and Naomi. Oh, Leah, Leah, why did you ever say 'Yes' to Jack Chamberlayne?"

Silence. Deb's eyes fixed intently on her sister; Leah's sinking to the floor. At last, "Why did I ever say 'Yes' to Jack Chamberlayne?" she begins, a little tremulously. "As much for your sake, Debbie, as for my own. Papa . . . . is our father, so, of course, we will say that he is very nice."

"Oh, very nice indeed," interpolates Deb, her pinched face weirdly sarcastic.

"But—he is not fond of his daughters. How could he be? How could a man who was not fond of mamma be fond of us? Well, he dislikes Naomi the least, perhaps; and Naomi is certain, whatever happens in life, to fall on her feet. But you, Debbie," snatching the child with a sort of passion to her heart, "my marriage will be everything to you. You want country air and green fields, you poor mite!—I declare you don't weigh as much as you did when I went away—and new milk and a pony. I know, every doctor has told me, what you want. And you shall have it all! Yes, Deb, and a fine little riding-habit made by the tailor. My dear, when I am married, you shall never be cooped up in a boarding-house any more."

The words pony, new milk, green fields, act on poor Deb like some magic stimulant. She starts up, looking more like a dead child than a living one, declares her headache gone, and, for the first time for hours, creeps down out of Leah's stiffened arms. And now M. Danton judges the moment come to give notice of his presence, by a subdued professional knock at the half-closed door.

During the past five minutes, every feeling of his heart, as regards Leah Pascal, has taken new colour and force. He has hitherto admired her physically; tolerated her—as men do tolerate pretty

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women—mentally; shrunk from her, morally. And behold! at once she has become harmonious in his sight; her faults, and they are many, are condoned. The sordid commonplace life seems set in tune. Leah can love! He walks into the room, in obedience to Deb's shrill "Entrez!" and sees her pallid and untidy, the remains of her scarce-tasted breakfast on a table beside her, the floor plentifully strewn with silks, ribbons, and such like millinery litter of every hue and kind.

"Monsieur Danton!" Instinctively Leah's hand goes to her hair. Alas! Nursing is directly antagonistic to modish coiffures; the coronet of golden plaits is pinned at least half an inch awry. "Debbie, how could you? I felt sure it was Désiré."

She rises, flushing rosy red, and in this flush, and her untidiness, and with her eyes worn and tired, looks lovelier than she has ever done before in Danton's sight.

"My visit is to Deb—a professional visit," he remarks gravely. "What have you been doing with yourself, Deb, to have one of your headaches again so soon? Too much champagne on Thursday evening, too much gas and excitement every evening of the week, I suspect."

Danton addresses the child, but he is holding Leah's hand, is looking into Leah's face with a grave interest, that makes her pulses leap.

"I was taken bad at nine, and it is now past one!" cries Deb, with importance. "And I have been in *torture* all the time, and I wanted to send for you, sir, only Leah would not"——

"Debbie, my dear!"

"You would not, Leah—you would not. You said Monsieur Danton did his best to keep out of our way, and, even to please me, you were not going to run after him! That is what Leah said, Monsieur Danton; and now you have come all of your own accord; and you will stay a long, long time, won't you?"

She makes Danton seat himself in an easy chair, then climbs upon his knee, and rests her hot head on his breast. He feels the weak, thready little pulse, asks one or two professional questions, inspects her tongue.

"If Deb were to run wild in the country for a year, we should have no more of these headaches, Miss Pascal. The physicians Debbie wants are fresh air and exercise."

"I know that," answers Leah. "When I live in England, I mean"——

"France would suit the child better," interrupts Danton, quickly. "Climate, soil—everything here would suit her better than England. I know half a dozen honest country people within reach of Paris, who would be glad to take her in charge."

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"Oh, but when Leah is married I must be near London!" says Deb. "You are going there, too, you know, Monsieur Danton. You say you will be surgeon some day at one of the London hospitals, so I shall be near you both. And Leah has promised to buy me a pony and a little riding-habit, made by the tailor, out of Jack's money."

Leah flames scarlet.

"I am outbid, Deb," says Danton, stroking the child's cheek kindly. "My poor country people might give you new milk and apples, and an occasional ride, perhaps, on a carthorse. A riding-habit made by the tailor is quite beyond my mark. Riding-habits made by tailors mean money, little Deb."

"I wish there were no such thing as money in the world!" cries Leah, her fair face kindling with a light so nearly resembling truth that Danton is fain to believe her words for the moment.

"And *I* wish there was money without the people the money belongs to," remarks Deb. "If just we three could be rich, without anybody else, we three, in a house, alone, and "——

"Monsieur Chamberlayne waits below," announces Désiré, peering with his mocking gamin face round the door. "Monsieur Chamberlayne will attend these ladies for their drive in the Bois."

Danton rises discreetly. "I am really not wanted, Miss Pascal," he remarks, with sudden assumption of the manner Esculapian. "If there is any return of the headache, you will let me know. I am not very far distant."

"Wait, at least, until we have had our talk out, M. Danton," she says to him, lowering her voice. "It is so seldom I can get any one to give me a real opinion about poor Deb. Et vous, Désiré, dire à Monsieur Chamberlayne"—Leah's French verbs are something fearful and wonderful: it is a theory of Colonel Pascal's that handsome girls are better without education—"Dire que mon petit sœur est malade. Je n'aller pas sortir aujourd'hui."

"Mon petit sœur est malade." Désiré repeats Leah's murdered genders aloud with infinite gusto, as he whirls, imp-fashion, down one flight of stairs after another, and has the keen happiness of sending off M. Chamberlayne, boiling over with anger, from the house. He further enjoys himself by making all the mischief possible with Lord Stair. Milor, just starting for his afternoon lounge in the Rue de Rivoli, chances to be in the entrance hall when Leah's message is delivered to her lover. He lingers after Jack has driven away, questions Désiré minutely as to the seriousness of the child's illness, the nature of her medical attendance, and ends by learning considerably more than he expected. Désiré's imaginative faculties are lively; his tongue is pointed. True child of the Paris streets, he can hardly speak without being epigrammatic, is never epigrammatic without being malicious. Lord Stair, not

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ordinarily a lavish man with his money, glides a twenty-sous piece into Désiré's dingy palm before starting for his walk.

And Leah and Danton? Reader, they spend the afternoon together, and they do not employ their time in the exclusive discussion of Deb's headaches. Before Désiré has well reached the bottom of the stairs, Leah remembers—"Ah, she fears M. Danton has forgotten! —that promise of his to play for her, without an audience. And when Debbie has been ill, music soothes the child better than any physic, and . . . . and what a pity it is there is no piano nearer than the drawing-room. If one could only have a song or two, without the society of the old ladies and Major Macnamurdo!"——

"You can have as many songs as you like by coming to my room, scarcely six yards distant," says Danton; "and Deb shall have grapes. You are well enough to eat grapes, Debbie? I thought so. The thing is settled."

Deb runs on, without waiting for a second invitation; but Leah—let me do her the justice of saying this—Leah hesitates. She is not scrupulous, overmuch, as to remote moral contingencies; quails not before the risk of endangering her own peace of mind, of jeopardising Danton's happiness. That she feels for him as she never felt for man before, she knows full well: the surrender of liberty, the journey to the Italian Lakes, only three days distant! But her excitement-loving nature, avid of pleasure or of pain, makes her court rather than shrink before danger like this. What she fears, mortally, is—not her own weakness, but the discovery by others of her weakness. Let the distraction of the moment be attainable by thoroughly safe, though tortuous means, and there are few people apter at improving opportunity than Leah Pascal. At the mere suspicion of outraged conventionality, she is a coward. "A handsome girl is a saleable commodity, worth so much in the marriage market. An unmarried girl, by committing one open breach of social decorum, lessens, or runs grievous chance of lessening, her own money value. And money is lord over all; and in forfeiting money, you forfeit everything." This is the creed in which Leah's soul has been reared—or starved. The keen satisfaction of accomplishing Danton's conquest, nay, the delight, more exquisite still, of surrendering herself to this new wild foretaste of love's intoxication, pale before the master-principle, the great acquired instinct of her life—circumspection.

"Don't go on so quickly, Debbie; wait for me." She says this in answer to some question she reads on Danton's face. "Perhaps it would be wiser, Monsieur Danton, to go down to the drawing-room?"

"Why? My piano is in better tune than Madame Bonchrétien's."

"And you have no old ladies in your room—fearful temptation! and you have grapes for Deb."

"And some Gloire de Dijon roses for you. Come."

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Danton takes her hand, draws it within his arm, and leads her away captive: just at this one moment, I believe, "had the fate been with them that has not been," might lead her to the other end of the world—to a happier, lowlier lot than any she shall know! "I am overbearing to the people I like," he remarks: "sick people, most of them, or wise men and women, the age of Deb; but I don't know what right I have to command you."

"It gives me pleasure to be commanded," says Leah. Involuntarily she thinks of the weak purposeless life with which her own is to be bound up, for all this side of eternity. "Nothing is so delightful as to have responsibility forcibly taken off one's hands, as you are taking it now."

"You had better let me take and keep it always," says Danton, half jestingly, half in earnest.

For an instant Leah's face is bright with smiles. Then, recollecting herself: "You would soon repent of the bargain, I suspect," she answers, a little gravely. "Whoever undertook to be my conscience-keeper would find the office no sinecure."

"I spoke of taking responsibility off your hands, Miss Pascal. Let me guide your actions, and I am quite ready to become your conscience-keeper afterwards."

"I think you two walk very slow," cries out little Deb. "If you don't make haste, Leah, I shall eat all Monsieur Danton's grapes before you come."

Danton's apartment is the pleasantest one in the house: on the strength of two small inner cabinets, which serve for sleeping and dressing-rooms, Madame Bonchrétien calls it a suite. "One of my permanent inmates, the Count Danton" (Madame confers titles on her lodgers at discretion) "occupies a suite of rooms on the third floor." The windows look south, towards the gardens of the Tuileries, and have carefully-tended boxes of mignonette and geraniums outside. Book-shelves, well filled, engravings, most of them of theatrical celebrities, are on the walls; a piano stands open in one corner; before the fire is wheeled a luxurious, sleep-inviting sofa, among the cushions of which little Deb has already nestled herself. A lingering odour of tobacco pervades the apartment. Pipe-sticks of all sizes and nations, a faded white-satin slipper, now used as a tobacco-pouch, are above the mantleshelf. On the centre table, in addition to a glorious bunch of roses, stand a basket filled with autumn fruits and a bottle or two of wine. Danton lives—not like a Sybarite, but like a man who has discovered that life's best happiness is work, and that a grand help towards the achievement of work are creature comforts.

And creature comforts come to him so easily, with "cette pauvre chère Smeet," living under the same roof! He returns home, fagged from the hospitals, and cool air and open windows greet him in

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summer; in winter, a blazing fire, closed shutters, and books and papers, left *as he left them*, on his table. If Miss Smith lack other more brilliant qualities, let this extraordinary virtue be recorded of her: she can set a room in order, yet leave books and papers intact! Fruit and flowers are sent to him throughout the year. M. Danton does not practise in Paris. At more than thirty years of age, he is a student still. But he gives his services gratuitously to his friends, penniless artists, half-starved chorus singers, and the like; and his friends repay him with such small offerings as their means command—and boundless gratitude! On a hundred and fifty pounds a year—this is the amount of his income, I should say, of his annual expenditure; "income," he has none—Danton considers himself, not without reason, a rich man.

"I did not know that any room of Bonchrétien's could look like this," cries Leah. "Why, Monsieur Danton, you must be a millionaire. What fruit! what flowers!"

"The roses are fine, are they not? They are a present from a poor little woman who . . . . well, never mind; perhaps you would have nothing to do with my roses if I told you too much. Now, choose; take any, or all, if you will."

"That is a poor compliment to the sender," says Leah, bending her face down over the flowers. "If your friend knew how you treat her presents, sir?"

"My friend cares for my pleasure only, Miss Pascal, and nothing can give me so much pleasure, just now, as to see you pleased."

Leah, upon this, selects two or three of the finest roses in the bunch, and fastens them in her dress. She has accepted a great variety of flowers, from a great variety of donors, in her time, and you may be sure knows how to infuse the most delicately subtle flattery into her manner of doing so. Yet, to watch her little conscious blush and flutter, a simple observer would declare she had never listened to a word of love, never encouraged a lover's hopes, before this moment. But Danton is not quite blind yet: his time is coming on lightning quick; every five minutes they pass together his senses become more hopelessly enslaved by the ineffable charm of Leah's face and voice. But he is not absolutely blinded; he can detect the actress in her still; can smile to himself over the very lures and artifices which will inevitably work his own undoing.

"I never feel quite sure about you, Monsieur Danton," she remarks, after a quick glance at his face. "You are exceedingly kind and flattering to me with your lips, and all the time I don't like the expression of your eyes. I wish I could be sure of you!"

"I wish I could be sure of myself, Miss Pascal," is Danton's answer; this time in a tone which the most hardened coquette in Europe could scarcely affect to misunderstand.

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Ah, well, how quick the hours, the happiest hours of Leah's life, go by! Debbie, worn out, curls herself into a corner of the sofa, when her grapes are eaten, and falls asleep; such sympathetic chaperons are little sisters of eleven! And then, in hazardously close proximity, they look over Danton's photographs, and Leah admires, but cavils at, the portrait which she is supposed to resemble. Too handsome, too handsome, by far, to be like her! When did she ever pretend to possess a Grecian profile, a pair of faultless lips? And yet she is vain enough to say, does Monsieur Danton agree with her, that her eyes have a different expression in them to *that woman's?* The question suggests an argument on beauty, generally, which leads to a dissection of Leah's features, one by one, with pitiless analysation by Danton of their defects. And then, after a time, they have music, soft music, not to disturb poor Deb; just a couple of French romances, the 'Serenade' of Schubert, and 'Si tu savais,' but that serve only too well to further the other little living romance on hand.

"Si tu savais." . . . Alas! Leah has learned it all too quickly, has gone through a cycle of mute teaching during the past couple of hours. Standing beside Danton as he sings, with that dangerous southern voice of his, Leah knows that she loves, and with a fool's insensate passion; knows that to feel the pressure of his hand, to exchange one kiss, one trembling word of hope, were heaven—quickly followed by the hell of poverty, the forfeiture of toilettes, fashion, all that her excellent marriage, the wisely-ordered sale of youth, nature, honesty, promises to bring!

Six o'clock clangs out loudly from the Madeleine, and at the same instant commences Désiré's energetic ringing of the first dinner-bell downstairs. With a start, Leah comes back from romance to fact, remembers that she and Danton have been alone three hours or more, and, waking up Debbie hastily, rushes away to her own room to prepare for dinner. The dress she chooses—Danton and she will be likely to remember that choice until their life's end—is a black silk, thickly covered with tiny yellow mouches, or beetles; a silk that has seen long service, but that becomes Leah's rich-hued, Eastern beauty to perfection, as she knows. A necklace and cross of amber, the Gloire de Dijon roses at her waist-belt, and she looks divine; the first clothes-artist in Paris could not improve her by a single touch. Let her put on what she will, hastily or after a couple of hours' rehearsal, you always feel that Leah Pascal is in the attire that suits her and the occasion as nothing else would. The girl may love, marry, conduct her earthly affairs, or choose her heavenward path, by the light of reason: she certainly dresses by inspiration, pure and unalloyed.

"If you had only known Monsieur Danton before you said 'Yes' to

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some one else," cries Deb, watching her with big fond eyes. It is about the hundredth time poor Deb has harped upon the same futile "if."

"Better late than never, Deb," answers Leah, lightly. Her spirit is buoyant, her heart gay as the roses she wears; she is heedless of yesterday, of to-morrow, of everything in space or time, save what the next three or four hours may bring forth. "We cannot help our ultimate fate, but we can laugh at fate as long as possible. Don't look so wise, Deb; and put on your new sash, child, it will do your headache good. Monsieur Danton and I are the very last people in the world to be lovers, but we may be excellent friends, he and I, and you, too, my pet, notwithstanding."

"And Jack?" says Deb appositely. "Isn't Jack to be excellent friends, too?"

"Oh, Jack will be——a great deal more than a friend, of course," answers Leah. And she changes colour, and becomes grave. The sound of Jack Chamberlayne's name has produced a curious effect on her. Walk abroad in the country on one of those hawthorn-scented mornings when every breath you draw seems a new lease of hope and life, then suddenly hear a death-bell toll across the sunny fields, and you will know the kind of effect I mean.

Sunday is always a quiet evening at Madame Bonchrétien's, and this evening it is exceptionally so; only eight people at the dinner-table. Colonel Pascal, at the first mention of his little daughter's illness, absented himself, overcome by his feelings, from the house, and is not likely to leave the shelter of his club until midnight. Bonchrétien has gone, for four and twenty hours, to a sister at Versailles, carrying away Naomi Pascal with her. Even to Naomi, obnoxiously hungry, nourished at half-price though she be, Madame Bonchrétien is lavish of civilities under the present golden prospects of the Pascal family. Mrs. Amiral Tom-son dines out. Old Mr. Pettingall attends the evening service of his church, having made his dinner at lunch-time, according to his custom on the sabbath.

"Quite a small family party, are we not, Leah?" says Lord Stair, rubbing his white hands and looking more than usually amiable—about the lips, rather than with the eyes—as Leah and Debbie enter the dining-room, Danton with them: I don't know how this accident happens. "Ah, Danton, how are you?" It is almost the first time he has addressed Danton during the two years they have sat at the same table, certainly the first time he has done so without the prefix of "Monsieur." "A thousand pities Madame Bonchrétien cannot limit our party to this number always. We should have opportunities of getting to know each other more intimately."

And he continues in the same pleasant, talkative mood throughout the whole of dinner. Secretes almonds, and sweet biscuits, playfully,

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for Deb (Lord Stair playful! *has* the undertaker measured him for his coffin yet? thinks Deb with a shiver); talks politics, or as much politics as men ever talk in Paris, with old Major Macnamurdo; helps Mrs. Wynch to the entire breast of a fricasseed chicken, and orders a pint bottle of Möet for himself. Were Leah not so thoroughly absorbed in her own fast-multiplying emotions such unexampled geniality upon the part of Lord Stair might well afford her ground for suspicion.

Immediately after dinner the party separates. Lord Stair, pleading an engagement, leaves the house; the old ladies, doubly sleepy by reason of its being Sunday, creep away to the drawing-room; and then, with Deb in her arms, Leah prepares to mount the hundred and one stairs that divide the rez-de-chaussée from the third floor. Not, however, until she has exchanged a whisper, as she passes, with Danton, a whisper that poor little forsaken Miss Smith notes and sighs over!

Debbie, never a ready sleeper, is trebly long in shutting her eyes to-night, more exacting than usual in the matter of Leah remaining beside her pillow and talking her into drowsiness with stories. "I know very well you want to go, Leah. I can see by your face you want to be off," holding her fast, prisoner, with her small hot hands. "And this one evening I thought I should have you to myself—Naomi away, and no horrid lovers about, and papa at the club. Pray what was all that long whisper of Monsieur Danton's?"

"Whisper of Monsieur Danton's" repeats Leah, innocently. "Let me see—why, that there was a talk of another war; oh, no! that was what Major Macnamurdo said. As far as I can remember, Monsieur Danton made some brilliant remark about the change in the weather, but I am not sure."

"Leah, if I try, honour bright, to go to sleep, will you solemnly promise to stop by my bed afterwards?"

"Well, of course, I must run down for a cup of tea, Deb; nothing more."

So Leah evades the promise, not without some pangs of self-reproach, and the moment Deb's breathing announces that she can move with safety, glides her arm from beneath the child's pillow, and makes her way, swiftly as her feet will carry her, down to the drawing-room.

It is now close upon ten o'clock. Mrs. Wynch, Madame la Comtesse, and Major Macnamurdo are dozing in their chairs; Miss Smith, greyer and gloomier than usual, sits in her place of office, behind the tea-cups. Beside a window in the farther corner of the room stands Danton. The night is like July: one of those delicious, hot, still nights which gladden the world occasionally in late autumn—our faithless mistress, Summer, mocking us with one last kiss before she

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departs! Leah drinks her cup of tea, and forces Miss Smith into conversation; she makes the circuit of the salon, and has something pretty to say to everybody; and then, accidentally, she finds herself near a window that stands open, becomes aware, for the first time, of M. Danton's presence, and stops short. If Miss Pascal had studied strategy under Von Moltke himself, she could not have executed this little masked flank-movement more neatly.

"Monsieur Danton, positively you have one of Madame's windows open after six o'clock. The establishment will go to the bad if this sort of laxity is allowed."

She joins him, and they watch the stars together (and each other's faces); presently lean forth a space, to breathe a fresher atmosphere than that of the salon; presently wish it were not too late to take a turn, just a quarter of an hour's turn, round the gardens of the Tuileries. You know the kind of easy gliding pace at which the journey along the downhill road invariably commences.

"Too late, and why too late?" says Danton at last. "It is barely ten o'clock yet, Miss Pascal. If you like to put yourself under my charge, we can walk half the length of the Champs Elysées, and be back by eleven. You really want exercise after all your nursing; take my professional advice."

"If I could be sure nobody would know," says Leah, glancing round at the three nodding old people; "if one could be positive Lord Stair was out of the house; and if it were not for Deb."

When a woman urges only one objection, there may be a chance for her; when she can think of three or four insuperable barriers to the carrying out of her own wishes, she is lost. Leah is lost, as far as a ten-o'clock unchaperoned walk in the Champs Elysées may be said to constitute perdition.

"I really don't think I should mind, but for Deb," she hesitates, two words from Danton having swept away all other obstacles. "If Deb should wake"——

"I will answer for Miss Smith being in her room."

He crosses over, upon this, to Miss Smith's side, and with a whisper electrifies her. Love may be Platonic or the reverse; jealousy is jealousy always. Miss Smith, in an instant, realises Danton's danger as clearly as she foresaw it the first evening of his return to the Rue Castiglione.

"My dear Monsieur Danton, anything you ask me to do is, of course, a command. But for you and Miss Pascal to venture out at this hour alone! It is unheard-of, incorrect, and a very great risk, under the circumstances, for Miss Pascal."

"Yes, you will go up to the child's room, will you not, and stay with her till her sister's return? Send Rose and Désiré to bed, and when I ring, let Miss Pascal in yourself. May I rely on you?"

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"If you think such a proceeding wise, either for you or for *her*."

"My dear friend, if I could ever think any of my proceedings wise!"

He telegraphs by a look to *her* that the latest difficulty is solved; and gliding, with her noiseless step, from the room, Leah runs upstairs, lightly as though she trod on air, to dress. After putting on her bonnet and shawl, she steals on tiptoe, with shaded candle, to take a farewell glance at Deb. The child is sleeping softly; not a reproach can conscience urge upon this score. And she will be back so soon; and she does so crave for air and movement, so passionately craves for one more hour—the last, it may be, in this mortal life—spent with Danton!

He awaits her at the bottom of the stairs, and after scanning her attire, item by item, sends her back promptly to the third étage, for a thicker veil and plainer bonnet. Her shawl, being black, will pass, and her dress. Unversed in millinery, Danton considers her dress black also, forgetful of the shining yellow mouches, the fatal yellow mouches, that, to the eye of an adept, would be visible in the darkest street, the thickest crowd in Paris.

"Now you are disguised to perfection," he whispers, when she comes back to him a second time. "You might stand before a court-martial of old ladies; you might meet Mr. Pettingall himself without fear of recognition."

"If I thought there was a chance of meeting him—of meeting any one—I would turn back yet," says Leah, waxing cowardly.

But she is under the guidance of a will stronger than her own. She hesitates, draws away; a minute later finds herself quietly walking along the Paris streets on Danton's arm.

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Bulwer and Dickens.

A CONTRAST.

The friendships of renowned Men of Letters have never failed to lend an additional charm to their lives, to their characters, and to their works; and it is pleasant to remember, and it always will be, that two of the foremost members in our time of that lasting Republic of Letters which needs no President, nor even a Chief of the Executive, were fast and cordial friends. Between Bulwer and Dickens there subsisted the closest intimacy, and it was never interrupted by the faintest cloud of suspicion, jealousy, or misunderstanding. Moreover, they uniformly expressed, one for the other, an unfeigned admiration. On several occasions they worked hand-in-hand for a common object; and we do not remember that, save in the region of politics, where, from the nature of things, they were never brought into collision, they were ever found in hostile camps.

Such a relation between men of genius in the same domain of human activity it is always agreeable to recall, though we cannot echo the shallow commonplace that true genius is never egotistical, never petulant, never quarrelsome, and never jealous. Alas! one's library shelf is full of the records of small, pitiful, and scandalous grudges between men of the most original minds and the highest attainments. There is no safe generalising on such a matter. Even in the very instance we are celebrating, it cannot be doubted that the merit of sustained friendliness must be attributed mainly to one of the parties to it, and that though two Bulwers might easily have moved in the same sphere without any danger of their clashing, two Dickenses would have hustled against each other mercilessly, and the skies would have rung with their repeated shocks. Let us, however, refrain from approaching that point too closely; dwelling rather with thankfulness upon the fact that, whatever the cause, Bulwer and Dickens never afforded to vulgar curiosity the deplorable spectacle of a quarrel among the gods.

Yet the two men were, in almost every conceivable quality and accident, save the one great common gift of genius, utterly unlike. So complete was this dissimilarity, that they are here to serve the purposes of a contrast, such as it would have been unbecoming to draw in their lifetime, but such as may with propriety be instituted now. Nothing can touch either of them further; nothing can now ruffle the friendship that in life was not disturbed; nothing that we

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can say runs the smallest risk of arousing jealousies which slept even on this side the grave. If flattery cannot soothe the dull cold ear of death, truth cannot possibly vex it, and even detraction breaks itself in vain against the rocky limits of the tomb. And of detraction of anybody, we trust nothing will be found in what we have to say. We only desire to be just, and, if possible, and it be not too presumptuous to aim at so much, to be in some degree suggestive.

They started differently; and it is highly probable that to that original difference in their fortunes should be chiefly ascribed the difference of the mode in which they respectively ran the race of life. At the first blush, and to judge superficially, it would seem as though all the advantage lay with Bulwer. We are not of that opinion; neither do we think that it would have been the view to recommend itself to either of the two men themselves. One was born to social position and dignity, to something more than competency—we speak here, of course, solely of what Bulwer inherited, and not of what fortune he carved for himself by his own splendid industry—to a sense of native importance and authority, to the soundest, widest, and most varied education, the education of a public school, of the university, of foreign travel, of life political, fashionable, and artistic; in a word, to everything that can be prepared for a man in this world without any exertion of his own. Bulwer was one of those who was good to give himself the trouble of being born, and all the Ages had given themselves the trouble of providing him with a handsome, cordial, and agreeable welcome.

Being born to all the good things of life is a terrible pitfall, especially in England, where, in spite of the general esteem in which true distinction is held, it has never been, and still is not, thought disgraceful in a "gentleman," after hundreds of pounds have been spent on what is called his education, to remain through life more ignorant even of what is taught at school and college than an ordinary stripling from a provincial Grammar Institute. It is only the other day that we heard an Etonian of some years' standing unblushingly ask a lady who was showing him some coins, what S. P. Q. R. meant? and another inquire of his sister-in-law why she called her deerhound Hecate, and who the deuce Hecate was? To be naked of all erudition, even the commonest, after having for several terms worn the costume of scholarship in the halls of learning, yet not to be ashamed, is the normal condition of hundreds of Fortune's favourites. There is no discredit attached among gentlemen to being grossly ignorant after having enjoyed all the opportunities of becoming singularly well-informed, provided you are a "gentleman." Not to be able to pull a good oar, to "scud the flying ball," to bring down your bird, and to drink your liquor like a man—not to be able to do all these things is disgraceful indeed.

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If you are only an accomplished artist in crafts, which, we should imagine, the son of any butcher or ploughman could master in three months, you will do well enough, if you can poke fun at the Latin grammar, and are ready with a bushel of chaff for somebody of your year who was an "awful sap."

Happily there are many English gentlemen who refuse to be only good cricketers, only good oarsmen, or only capital hands at "going straight." Those are most excellent accomplishments; and happy he who possesses them, if he unites with them powers which mark the civilised man from the savage, the gentleman from the rustic. But the lamentable fact still remains, that the great bulk of Englishmen born in the position of Bulwer regard life as a mere "jolly game" or "awful spree," from beginning to end, though they end in all cases by discovering that it is nothing of the sort, and that the best exercise they can make of their ingenuity in early days, is to discover how little they will be allowed to do in the way of developing their minds. Man is not naturally an industrious animal; and where books and study are concerned, Englishmen are, perhaps, the least industrious animals in the world. To this natural indisposition to study we have only to add the more than leniency of judgment which is extended to those persons of independent means who refuse to study at all, and we have at once the most powerful encouragement, not to say inducement, to them to look upon learning, even of the mildest sort, as "an infernal bore."

If our readers have borne patiently with us, whilst, perhaps, we seemed to be disburdening our mind at the expense of relevancy to our subject, we will now proceed to show that the foregoing observations would not have been made in this place at all, but for the light they throw upon the different characters and careers of Bulwer and Dickens. That they are observations which would have received the assent of Bulwer, we know for a certainty; for he has expressed them himself, only with far more force and grace, in several places, and notably in those 'Speeches' which his son, the present Lord Lytton, has recently edited, and prefaced with a Memoir, which, we are happy to think, is to grow, in his pious and competent hands, into a Biography. We shall probably have to cite from these before we have done; but it suffices to assert here, in connection with the immediate part of our subject, that Bulwer's natural advantages consisted, not in being "born" a gentleman, in the common sense of that phrase; not in being born to ease, position, and a liberal education, but in being born with the temper that resists all the yet more natural temptation not to avail oneself of such advantages. Bulwer was born an aristocrat, in the only signification in which a man can with any reason, propriety, or truth be said to be "born" an aristocrat; he was born with an acute sense of what is best and noblest,

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and with a firm determination to possess both. Nobody can inherit aristocracy so as not to be able to divest himself of it; and nobody can be born so devoid of it as not to be able, in the course of a resolute and honourable life, to acquire it. It is inconceivable that Bulwer, had he been cradled in any class of society, would not have ennobled both himself and it by his burning aspiration after what is best. He envied no one; he scorned no one. But, for himself, he intended to be as thorough an aristocrat—in other words, as accomplished and superior a person—as native powers and steady exertion could possibly make him.

Dickens became acquainted with life under very different circumstances. One continually hears the remark that Dickens was "not a gentleman." Unfortunately, the observation is generally made by persons who are not gentlemen themselves, in the sense in which they themselves use the word. Dickens was born in a comparatively humble rank of life, though the humbleness of it consisted rather in its poverty than its occupations. Poverty, with all deference to a plutocratic generation, hinders no man from being a gentleman; and, without venturing to obtrude our own opinion, we may observe that Bulwer, who was a pretty good judge in such matters, would have been very much surprised if anybody had expressed a doubt as to Dickens being a gentleman, as here understood. Aristocrat he undoubtedly was not; indeed, he was precisely the opposite. And out of his being the opposite of an aristocrat, spring the chief points of contrast between him and Bulwer. But we must not anticipate. All that it is necessary to indicate here is, that Dickens was born under circumstances which made his early life inexpressibly painful to him; but we must add, inexpressibly instructive. He might have exclaimed, "Oh, l'heureux temps quand j'étais si malheureux!" The child was, indeed, the father of the man. His boyish miseries were the making of him. From them he learned both his pathos and his laughter. If Goethe be right, and he is a pretty good authority on such matters, Dickens's early sorrows are not to be over-compassionated by those who congratulate him on the triumphs of his genius.

> "Who ne'er his bread in sorrow ate,
> Who ne'er, through lonely midnight hours,
> Weeping upon his bed has sate,
> He knows ye not, ye heavenly powers!"

How sorrowfully young Dickens ate his bread, and how often he must have sat weeping in his little bed, Mr. Forster has abundantly told us, or, rather, Dickens has told us himself. A common nature would not have felt the ignominy of pasting labels on blacking-bottles; a weak nature, no matter how uncommon in other respects, would have been crushed by it. Dickens's nature was uncommon in

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every respect, and, beyond a doubt, uncommonly strong. Assuming that the object was to make the most of the man's mind, and character, and genius, as they actually were, we may well doubt if Dickens could have been trained more fortunately. He was obliged to work, and he was driven into working at what was congenial to him, by being set to work at what was most distasteful. And at the same time—and this should never be forgotten—he received quite enough of what is commonly called education to be in a position afterwards to educate himself in those branches of knowledge in which he was necessarily at first deficient, had he been minded to do so.

Whilst the circumstances which surrounded the boyhood and youth of Dickens and Bulwer were very different, those affecting Dickens were by no means calculated to injure the development of genius, and those affecting Bulwer were scarcely calculated in any special way to promote it. Bulwer's early experience was more dangerous, that of Dickens's was more painful. What effect they had upon the character of each respectively we will consider at a later stage.

They both felt the fire of genius early, and both were eager to court for it the light of publicity; but the reception given to the two was by no means the same. Dickens shot into notoriety with 'Pickwick,' and his first success was as dazzling even as any he afterwards enjoyed. It was not so with Bulwer. Let us hear himself on the subject. The words were spoken at a banquet given in his honour in 1854, and the entire speech is to be found in the volume recently published by Messrs. Blackwood, of which we have already made mention.

"Perhaps it may encourage younger writers if I remind you that I was not successful at first in any new line that I attempted. My first efforts at prose composition were refused admission into a magazine. My first novel was very little read, and it is not included in the general collection of my works. My first poetry was thought detestable, and my first play very nearly escaped being damned. Thus, perhaps, few writers have been less intoxicated with the rapture of first success; and, even when I did succeed, perhaps few writers, upon the whole, have been more unsparingly assailed by hostile critics. If I had relied solely upon my intellectual faculties, I should long since have retired from the field, disheartened and beaten; but I owe it to that resolution which is at the command of all men who will only recollect that the first attribute of our sex is courage—the resolution to fight the battles of literature with the same bull-dog determination with which I, and no doubt all of you, fought our battles at school—never to give in so long as we had a leg to stand upon—that at last I have succeeded so far as to receive this honour in a capital renowned for its learning, and at the hands of a people who may well sympathise with the man who does not rely so much upon his intellect, no matter what the grade of that intellect may be, as upon his stout heart and his persevering labours."

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Doubtless this utterance was perfectly sincere, and free from affectation. Yet there is a certain amount of unconscious exaggeration in it. Bulwer by no means experienced how hard it is to climb Fame's steep. He got there very easily, and his merit consists not in struggling for years against unpopularity and neglect—for he never suffered from either—but in never allowing success to soften his sinews or cause him to relax his energies, and in ever placing before himself, as the strongest incentive to exertion, not the plaudits either of critics or the crowd, but a deep-seated love of his art and a passionate preference for noble ideals in literature. We cannot for one moment allow that he was not a singularly fortunate man. It is true that 'Falkland,' his first, was not successful; but 'Pelham,' his second, enjoyed a striking triumph; and we are not aware that he ever afterwards published a romance which was not welcomed either by the press or the public, and usually by both. He was accurate, no doubt, in saying that he was often unsparingly assailed by hostile criticism. That a first play should have nearly been damned proves that it was not damned; and the fact remains that Fortune smiled upon Bulwer's dramatic efforts quite as graciously and promptly as she did upon his efforts in the domain of prose fiction. Byron observes, in his Preface to 'Marino Faliero,' that Horace Walpole has never had justice done to him as an author, because he was "a nobleman and a gentleman." Byron, at least, did not suffer for the same sin, nor do we think Bulwer had to pay any heavy penalty for it. Of course, there always will be jealous and malignant persons, whom any form of superiority, whether real or conventional, offends. But, on the whole, the crowd "loves a lord," and, *cæteris paribus*, we fancy a publisher will give more for a book by a man of title than for one by a member of the humbler mass of mankind. Only in one branch of literature can Bulwer be said not to have succeeded to the extent of his wishes and of what he naturally, but modestly, thought due to him. He aspired to be a poet of consequence, and he wrote an epic poem, more than one didactic poem, a poetical drama, and many lyrics. He was not crowned with the bay, nor do we think he ever will be. He has left it to his son to complete that part of his career. But he had a *succès d'estime* even here; and if he was not highly extolled, at any rate he was not ignored.

It would, therefore, be incorrect to speak of Bulwer otherwise than as a rapidly and continuously successful writer. But his success and the success of Dickens were something very different. Dickens's success was what the French call a *succès fou*. People went mad about his books, the critics maddest of all; and, sad to say, Dickens followed their example. The world offered him draught after draught of the sickliest adulation, and he drank them to the lees. He was literally drenched with flattery, and he revelled in it. The people of

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Boston are laughed at in America because, as Mr. Oliver Wendell Holmes says of them, they fancy their town to be the hub of the world, upon which its wheels revolve. Dickens at last got to think that his new novel, nay, the new number of his novel, was the pivot upon which everything in London, England, and finally America, revolved; and there were never wanting a host of folks to abet him in the idea. Quite apart from the absurdity of such a position, it is impossible to conceive anything more injurious to a man's moral and mental nature. It produces a sort of softening of the brain, and causes him who suffers from it to lose all sense of proportion of the relative magnitude of things, and of his own relation to the external world. Pope has painted for us an immortal picture of one kindled by true genius and inspired by fair fame, yet "by flatterers besieged," and truly ends with the expression of a doubt whether one should laugh or weep over such a spectacle. The latter seems more appropriate; for the individual who has the ill-fortune to be so surrounded and so constituted will infallibly have to pay forfeit in some form. For the world, far from consisting mainly of devotees and worshippers of genius, is composed, for the most part, of people who do not care one dump about it; and few, very few, feel for it more than that desultory curiosity which is equally awakened by a new royal duchess, the captain of a merchantman who has killed three Lascars with a belaying-pin, or by the "Two-headed Nightingale." We will engage to say that all the men of genius that ever lived have not excited as much interest and curiosity in the world as existed in England for eighteen months for the butcher of Wagga-Wagga; and a man who can reap any pleasure from the gaping wonder of such an audience must nourish a low estimate of human dignity. Even those persons who compose what is called good society, however ready they may be to bow down to titular rank, and sometimes to wealth, view mere genius with a very languid curiosity indeed; and a distinguished man of letters who walks about with an ever-present and conscious sense of his own importance, or of the importance of his art, must, we should think, have rather a bad time of it.

Dickens escaped this penalty, at least, by never going into what is called "good society." We can quite understand and sympathise with the person who refuses to enjoy its advantages, and who looks upon "good society" as, upon the whole, the most distressing of all human experiences. But in order to feel this sincerely, and independently of all egotism and self-love, a man must be one of two things: he must be passionately fond of books, or passionately fond of silence and that face of Nature which is the most silent of all things. Dickens was passionately fond of neither. He read but little, and he loved to talk. In a word, he was a singularly sociable human being. Unfortunately, he cared for no society in which the

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central human being was not himself. That result was generated by his rapid and tremendous success, by his surrendering himself, without compunction or restraint, to its intoxicating influences, and by the absence of all corrective to the unhealthy and deplorable state of mind it begets. We have no wish—and, indeed, it is not our business—to dwell on the more strictly moral effect produced upon an unquestionably open, kindly, and sympathising nature. All that we have to note is how it influenced his literary career and productiveness; for at this point the contrast between him and Bulwer reaches its culmination, becomes striking in the extreme, and, as we think, ineffably instructive.

Mr. Forster, in the Biography of his illustrious friend, has alluded with delicacy to this serious blemish in Dickens's character. As the biographer puts it, he had no refuge of the mind to fall back upon when outward things arrayed themselves against him, or when they even ceased to devote themselves to his pleasure and glorification. To the truly literary or artistic nature there must, we should think, be something deeply painful, and, indeed, humiliating, in the feverish solicitude of Dickens to be at work upon a new story as soon as ever the last was published and duly greeted with clouds of incense, and his restless anxiety that, in the sensation it creates and the circulation it obtains, it should transcend all the stories that have gone before. That particular form of restlessness which is best described as divine energy, and which does not permit a man ever to desist from his unwearied task of doing things great and good, is the noblest quality probably which can be predicated of a human being. But then all such energy, all truly divine energy, is not feverish, but tranquil; not fussy, but reposeful; not anxious, but serenely confident. And this confidence springs not in the least from the certainty, or from any calculation, that the world will hail the work, when completed, as a great work, or even altogether from the conviction that, let the world's opinion be what it may, the work *is* great, but from the feeling, which is akin neither to pride nor to conceit, that it is the best work the doer of it can do, that he did it for its own sake and in allegiance to a lofty ideal, and that its greatness and goodness are in no degree dependent upon the smiles of critics or the huzzas of the multitude.

Dickens, unhappily, had no such self-built citadel to fall back upon. He kept looking at the multitude as a vain man or woman keeps looking at the glass, and its reflection of his merits was his own estimate of them. "I never accept from the public," said Goethe, "approbation which I have not already bestowed upon myself." So every man should feel. Dickens was never quite sure that what he had written was excellent—prone as he was, like most authors, to be carried away by the fervour of working into love of the work

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done—until he received assurance of it from his publishers in the shape of fifty thousand copies sold, and fifty thousand more being printed, or something in that strain. We do not know that any of Dickens's works failed. Some of them deserved to "fail," as some of the works of all prolific authors necessarily deserve to fail. They were poor, and good judges said so, even at the time. But the ordinary ruck of reviewers never said so; and if a protesting voice or two were raised, Dickens was far more than compensated by the gigantic sale of good, bad, and indifferent alike; and as long as his work sold, he was quite incapable of believing it either bad or indifferent, just as, if it had not sold, he would have been quite incapable of knowing that it was excellent and not troubling his head further about the matter, save to resolve that his next work should be, if possible, more excellent and, if it so happened, find still fewer readers. Johnson's grand answer to the question, how he felt when he sat in the pit and saw his play damned—"Like the Monument, sir!"—could never have proceeded from Dickens. Mr. Ruskin has poured out the vials of his wrath—justly enough—upon Lectures and Readings, incidentally observing that but for them Dickens might have lived till eighty, and gone on writing his "blessed books." It was a lucky thing for Dickens that he did not; for his inventive capacity was well-nigh exhausted, and he would have lived miserably had the constant recurrence of "tremendous successes" been denied him. It is inconceivable that even the public, forbearing as it is to old favourites, would have indefinitely tolerated the mere mannerisms without novelty, and the grotesqueness without humour, into which Dickens, once so fresh, so original, and so matchlessly humorous, was already slowly lapsing. They would have turned from him at last, and life, for him, would have lost its savour.

But why should his powers have quitted him thus early? and why, if they did, should he not have found a full and fitting substitute for them in declining years? The answer to these questions is the key to the most striking of all the various contrasts between Bulwer and Dickens. No one can pretend that Dickens might not have become a highly-educated and scholarly man, had he so chosen, in spite of the necessarily imperfect education of his boyhood and youth. He succeeded so soon, and he enjoyed the facilities for leisure and self-cultivation so completely, that he might easily, by thirty-five years of age, have been, in every sense of the word, a man of letters. But knowing little or nothing of books to begin with, he never laboured to know more; and we fancy it may safely be asserted that he was the most ignorant author of repute that ever lived. He trusted entirely to observation and native genius; and he found that at fifty both were well-nigh exhausted. It is wonderful they lasted so long, considering how little the soil was assisted from without. To him, "the heir of all the

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ages," all the ages were a closed volume; and of the poetry, art, history, philosophy, of the long human race, he knew practically nothing, and wanted to know nothing. "*Quelle triste vieillesse vous vous préparez*," said Talleyrand to some one who would not learn whist. With far more truth and infinitely deeper pathos may the remark be made of a writer, no matter how great his genius, who neglects the writers who have gone before him. Dickens died, not quite in time, perhaps, altogether to escape the penalty.

Instead of allowing himself to be entirely absorbed in his own productions, had Dickens uniformly cultivated an intelligent and generous interest in the writings of the great dead, they, without in the smallest degree injuring or detracting from his own originality and individuality, would have insensibly watered and re-enriched the ground which he was continually using up without ever putting anything back into it. Not only would he thereby have enlarged his sympathies by enlarging his knowledge; not only would he have obtained a more just view of men and things, a more correct sense of proportion, and of the relative value of himself and his own work to the sum total of other selves and other work in this world, but he would have found at fifty, at sixty, ay, if needs be, at seventy, that his mind was still fresh, young, and unexhausted, and was prepared, with just as little effort as ever, to delight mankind by its vigorous and lively energy.

If any one doubts this, let him think of Bulwer. If 'Kenelm Chillingly' is not as young as 'Pelham'—ay, younger—in freshness, *verve*, and elasticity, then we are but poor judges. Where is there a trace in 'The Parisians' of old age, or even of the stealthy advances of old age? The words are the words of wisdom, but they are spoken with the enthusiasm and dewy freshness of the boy. Who thought it was a more than sexagenarian that wrote 'The Coming Race'? Till the world learned who was its author, it fancied that a new light was coming up over the horizon. But like that star which ever follows the sun, and which is both morning star and evening, so Genius, when it continues to draw its illumination from the great central suns which have long since joined the heavens, and burn there eternally, immortal constellations, shines just as brightly in the evening of life as in the rosy dawn. To us, there is something unspeakably beautiful and consoling in this continuousness of Bulwer's genius and creative power. But then he was a student, and he lived habitually among the Immortals. It is they who wean us from the multitude and wed us to our art, by placing before us the perfect fulfilment of the celestial ideals which we humbly, but not the less resolutely, aspire to rival. They replenish our flagging spirits, even as theirs were replenished by those who preceded them. They keep feeding, and, if the phrase may be passed, manuring our minds, which thereby

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may be safely cropped almost without intermission; the subtle chemistry of the mind producing something very different from what was put into the soil.

Nor let any one suppose for a moment that the study of books unfits a man for the uses and services of life. They never unfitted Bulwer. If a man gives himself up to them entirely, they do what everything does which is allowed to assume the rank of a master passion; they stint his nature and narrow his horizon. But there is no necessity to give oneself up to them entirely, or anything approaching to entirely, and Bulwer never did so. He used this great advantage, he never abused it. The consequence was that his breadth of view concerning all things, like the variety of his attainments and the heterogeneity of his productions, was amazing. We think it must be allowed that he was the most comprehensive and many-sided of all English men of letters, living or dead. Indeed, we may say of him with perfect propriety, *Omnis Aristippum decuit color*. An admirable novelist in three, if not in four, distinct styles, a delightful essayist, a capital dramatist, a master of all but the highest forms of verse, a distinguished orator, a popular and accomplished man of the world, a working and deep-seeing politician, a rare scholar in the tongues and literatures of the ancient and the modern world alike, he went on ripening to the very last; and the pen dropped from his hand as he was writing the last pages of a work which, but for its mature experience, might have proceeded from an aspirant of five-and-twenty, just introducing himself to a delighted public.

The persons who infer from Bulwer's studiousness, from the palpable benefits he reaped as an author, from the perusal of the writings of others, and from the power with which it endowed him to remain productive, and never *re*productive, to the last, that he was inferior in genius to those who live but do not learn, need be set down —let it be said frankly and unshrinkingly—as shallow and incompetent judges. "After all," said Johnson, "Shakespeare could only impart what he had first learned;" and as the sources of learning are practically infinite, so should be his indefatigability in acquiring who wishes not to desist from teaching.

But more than all mere learning, and more than all learning and teaching together, is that broad estimate of life, that serene catholicity of judgment, which can spring only from wide and various knowledge, in which is necessarily contained a knowledge of the Past as well as of the Present. It was our intention to let Bulwer speak more for himself than the length of our own observations now renders possible; but if these few pages serve to bring into greater relief this special quality of his, they will have served their purpose. One passage, however, we must quote, for it will enable us

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to close this "Contrast" in a marked, and, we think, in an accurate manner. It is to be found at page 186 of the second volume of the 'Speech,' and is an extract from an address to the Leeds Mechanics' Institute, delivered in 1854.

"Wherever I look, I see so much merit in every division of our people, that whatever class I had been born and reared in, of that class I should have been justly proud. There is not a class of which I would not have said, 'I belong to those who made England great.' If I had been born a peasant, let me be but self-taught and self-risen, and I would not have changed my brotherhood with Burns for the pedigree of a Howard. If I had been born a mechanic or manufacturer—for allow me to class together the employed and the employer—I should have said, 'Mine is the class which puts nations themselves into the great factory of civilisation; mine is the class which has never yet been established in any land but that it has made the poor State rich, and the small State mighty. If I had been born a trader, the very humblest of that order, I should have boasted proudly of the solid foundation of public opinion and of national virtues, which act upon the spirit and energy, upon the integrity and fair dealing, by which that great section of our middle class have given a tone and character to our whole people. . . . It is owing much to the high spirit and sense of honour which characterises the British trader that the word gentleman has become a title peculiar to us, not, as in other countries, resting only upon pedigrees and coats of arms, but embracing all who unite gentleness with manhood. . . . If I had been told there was something in trade which stinted the higher or more poetical faculties, I should have pointed to the long list of philosophers, divines, and poets that have sprung from the ranks of trade, and, not to cite minor names, I should have said, 'It is we who have the glory of producing the woolstapler's son who rules the intellectual universe under the name of Shakespeare.' This pride of class I should have felt, let me only be born an Englishman, whether as peasant, mechanic, manufacturer, or tradesman; but being born and reared amongst those who derive their subsistence from the land, I am not less proud that I belong to that great section of our countrymen from whom have proceeded so large a proportion of those who have helped to found that union of liberty and intellect which binds together the audience I survey—from whom came the great poets, Chaucer and Gower, Spencer and Dryden, and Byron and Scott; from whom the great pioneers of science, Worcester and Cavendish, Boyle and Bacon."

What sort of a voice is this? To us it seems to be the voice of a thorough aristocrat, as we defined that term at the outset of our paper. It is the voice of a gentleman, who is not—what, unhappily, so many so-called and "born" gentlemen are—a "snob." We have observed of late that, amongst "smart people"—smart, not in the American sense, but in the equally slangy sense of polite society—a habit is arising of calling persons "snobs" who are advancing, or have advanced themselves and their species by their own efforts, by trade. If the word were kept for vulgar plutocrats, we could have no objection to offer, but when it is applied to honest and meritorious industries, we necessarily feel that the person so applying it utters

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his own name and nature aloud, and so spares anybody the trouble of labelling him.

Clearly this was Bulwer's feeling, because he was a real aristocrat, and not a false or conventional one. Accordingly he looked at life with the eyes of an aristocrat, and jealousy or envy was accordingly foreign to his disposition. He hated the base, and he loathed the mean; but he would have wished to reconcile anything and everybody not base or mean by the ties of a common nobleness and kinship. We rather shrink from bringing out this portion of the Contrast too sharply. But it would remain very imperfect if we did not recall the fact that all Dickens's genius, all his success, all his experience, all his native kindliness, did not save him from being as narrow and exclusive in his judgment of "classes" as he was narrow and exclusive in his occupations and his tastes. He wrote with the greatest scorn of people and institutions of whom he knew absolutely nothing, and concerning whom he would not condescend to learn anything—we will not use the term politically; for politics are quite foreign to our subject. But he had cherished the radical and levelling mind, and never trained or permitted himself to appreciate what he did himself possess. Doubtless, much must be forgiven him, by reason of his early difficulties. But, as we have said, the drawbacks incidental to them might have been overcome, and Dickens might, at fifty, have been as large-minded even as Bulwer himself. There are those who think his native genius was greater, much greater, than that of Bulwer. That is a matter not easily ascertained or solved, and we shall not attempt to solve it. We certainly think his native genius was quite as great as that of Bulwer. But the results, taken in their entirety, were not so satisfactory. And whilst the life and career of Dickens, in so far as they can be imitated, should serve, for the most part, rather as a warning than an example, the literary career of Bulwer may, for the most part, be set up as a noble and lofty pattern that can lead no one astray.

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Lilith.

Chapter IV.

While all this was taking place at Mr. Langenheim's studio, Arthur Vane had gone to see Lady Emmy, and had conveyed to her the intelligence that he had left her brother alone at the studio, and that he fancied he was getting to think more and more seriously of the artist's daughter. Lady Emmy said very little at the time, but when Vane had gone and her husband came in, she said to him, "Harry, things are going on just as I feared they would with my boy; he is getting more and more infatuated with Lilith Langenheim, and I would give my right hand to stop it."

"Well, dear," said Sir Harry, "I'm afraid that wouldn't do much good; besides, I might object."

"This is no laughing matter, really, dear Harry," said she. "I feel so certain that mischief will come of it if he should go so far as to propose to her."

'What? do you mean she'll reject him, and he'll be miserable?"

"No, no; better he should be miserable for years; of course she will accept him."

"Just so, of course she will," said Sir Harry. "It's a great chance for her; she would like to be Lady Falcon, I am sure! besides, I think she likes him."

"Who can tell what her likes and dislikes may be? Who can read the secret of her unfathomable eyes?"

"It seems to me, Emmy, that you've got a kind of craze about her eyes. But if you really take it so much to heart—and, after all, you know Falcon a great deal better than any one else does—can't something be done?"

"What can be done? What would make Falcon alter one iota of his intention when he has made it, as I fear he has? Even if I could tell him more about Lilith Langenheim than I can, would he heed it coming from me? He would only set it down as over anxiety for him, mixed, perhaps, with a spice of woman's jealousy."

"Just so, that's very true," said Sir Harry, who was here struck with a sudden inspiration which he acted upon that evening by going to see Arthur Vane. Having arrived at his rooms, and found him at home, he walked up and down in a nervous manner for a space, while Vane waited in amusement, knowing from these signs that some grave communication would follow. Presently Sir Harry gave utterance to that which was brewing in his mind.

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"Have you been at old Langenheim's often lately with Falcon?" he asked.

"Yes, tolerably often," replied Vane.

"And—a—what do you think about him and Miss Langenheim?"

"I think she has made a very strong impression on him."

"Ah, just so!" said Sir Harry. Now, I'm not going to say a word against that little girl. She's a friend of yours, I believe; and, indeed, I haven't got a word to say. Emmy says she was a terrible flirt once, and if she was, I don't see that that was any crime; besides, women always say those things of each other. But don't you think that——"

Here Sir Harry's eloquence failed him, and he stopped dead short.

"Well?" said Vane, rather enjoying the other's perplexity.

"Well—what I mean is, that it never could be a suitable match for Falcon. He ought to marry somebody of his own *monde*, like Miss Norman, for instance: somebody with some ideas of convention, to tame down his odd ways. Now you know, if he is to marry Miss Langenheim, between them both they'll be turning the world upside down."

"There is some truth in that, no doubt," said Vane, thoughtfully. But what is to be done?"

"Just what Emmy said," replied Sir Harry, with a self-satisfied chuckle. "I didn't say anything to her, but I thought the thing to be done was to come and talk to you. If anybody can put the thing before Falcon in some light like that, you can."

"I can hardly tell him that he and Miss Langenheim would upset the world."

"Of course not—of course not; but you might hint something about wisdom, and prudence, and reflection. He's devoted to you, and more likely to listen to you than to any one else."

Vane paused in thought a little, and then said, "Well, I will do what I can; but that, I am sure, will not be much."

"Oh, I am sure Falcon will listen to anything you say."

"And never act upon it. However, I will try."

It was with considerable relief that Sir Harry took his departure, being convinced that he had done much to prevent that occurrence which his wife so much dreaded. Vane, as has been seen, undertook the unusual task demanded of him with a readiness somewhat singular under the circumstances. He said not a word in praise of Lilith, with whom he certainly was now on terms of friendship. He acceded quietly to all that Sir Harry advanced against her making a fit wife for Falcon. There was, indeed, a considerable portion of truth in this, as he could not deny; yet he wondered, after Sir Harry had gone, why he had not spoken to him of her cleverness and brightness, and the many good qualities which he discerned in her. Finally,

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he laid his silence to the account of the deep interest which he took in Falcon's welfare. But, as has been said, Vane was not a very correct interpreter of his own feelings. However, he resolved to see his cousin, and beg him to reflect before he took any important step.

"Of course he will reflect without my asking him," said Arthur to himself; "still I may put the thing to him in a fresh light, and anyhow I shall have done no harm, and perhaps gratified Emmy."

Next morning, accordingly, Vane called upon Falcon, and went straight to his object.

"Much as you dislike interference," he said, "I have come to interfere with you for once. I have observed for a long time past, as you are aware, a growing inclination on your part for Miss Langenheim. I know that you are so likely to have thought over everything, studied everything about her, much more closely and keenly than I could with my less steady nature, that I will say only this to you. Pray think yet a little more—pray study yet a little more—before you take any decisive step. Come away—to the country or the Continent—with me, if you will, for a week or two, and see whether you are still in the same mind. Of course I know that while I make and unmake my mind fifty times, you make up yours once and for all; but I do not forget that in speaking thus. The wisest of us may be mistaken as to our own hearts; and your welfare is so dear to all of us, that I have felt urged to say this. Knowing why I have said it, you will forgive me for saying it."

"I forgive you, my dear Arthur, and I thank you," said Falcon; "but you are too late. I proposed to Lilith, and was accepted, yesterday. I was about to come and ask for your congratulations when you arrived just now."

Vane started back, and opened his mouth with surprise. Then he advanced to Falcon and shook him warmly by the hand. "My dear Falcon, I do congratulate you heartily," he said. He experienced a curious feeling as he spoke the words. He felt much surprise at Falcon's quickness of action, much pleasure at the prospect of his happiness, which he trusted would be established in spite of Lady Emmy's forebodings. Mingled with these, however, was a tinge of another feeling, to which, had he not been certain that what he himself felt for Lilith was mere friendship, he would have been inclined to give the name of regret, or even of something more violent. As it was, he dismissed it as he had a way of doing with transient impressions which troubled him. After all, it might be a shade of selfish regret at the inevitable loss, to some extent, of the society of two friends, which he must now put up with.

Not many weeks after this Lord Falcon and Lilith were married, and went for a tour on the Continent.

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Chapter V.

On their return from foreign travel, the Earl and Countess came to take up their residence at Falcontree Hall. The house stands on a slight eminence at the head of a small village, which slopes down a hill to the sea in one of the most remote parts of the English coast. There as yet no railway engine has screamed its discordant and dangerous message of progress and civilisation; and there the inhabitants are distinguished by a simplicity of mind, and a grand manner resulting from that simplicity, which they would perhaps lose were they nearer to the turmoil of the world. There is a kindly community of feeling among them which is rarely found in collected humanity. Many of them have sailed in trading ships to far corners of the earth, to Japan, to America, to Australia, all of which places are included by that part of the population which remains at home under the generic term of "out foreign." But however many, however long, may be those voyages, the voyagers return from them to Falcontree village as to a home, and are greeted by their old friends and companions as being members of the same family, on excellent terms with each other —wherein they differ from some families. They are far from want of interest in the doings of mankind, but however important may be the wars or rumours of wars which rack statesmen's brains and stir the pulses of Europe, it cannot be denied that to the natives of this village the results of the fishing have a much nearer importance. They are not deeply troubled by the calamities which may affect thousands in the capital, but when sorrow comes to one of themselves, it is in a measure the sorrow of all. For these advantages, if they are advantages, there must be some counterweight: the want of intimate acquaintance with the movement of the times accounts for the presence among the villagers of certain habits of mind once common to humanity at large, now exploded for the most part, save in places where the exploding influence of science has not yet brought its force to bear. Among such habits is that of superstitious belief, and for the exercise of this no better object could be found than Falcontree Hall. The house had been, until the return of Lord Falcon and his wife, practically uninhabited since the latter part of the seventeenth century, when another Lord Falcon had lived there for a time with his wife, and had disappeared, leaving behind him a weird memento, in the shape of a picture, which he caused to be hung in the organ-room. This room, it should be said, is on the right hand as one enters the hall. The hall doors look out on a terrace studded with flower-beds, and bounded by a low wall wherein is a wicket-gate, whence a narrow and precipitous path leads down through wooded cliffs to the sea. As to the reasons which induced that Lord Falcon, who possessed the house at the time spoken of, to leave it suddenly, there were many

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rumours; but the facts, which were generally supposed to affect in some way the honour of the family, had been so carefully hushed up by him that even at the time no one could say how much truth lay in the many stories set afloat to account for his proceedings, and naturally through the lapse of years these tales were credited with less and less certainty. They had blended, however, at length into one form more or less definite, which depended for its truth as much upon the picture in the organ-room as upon anything else. It was supposed that there had been some quarrel between Lord Falcon and his wife; that he had separated from her, under what circumstances precisely no one pretended to determine; that unable to bear the associations of life in England, he had gone over to Holland, where he learnt as a pastime or a distraction the art of painting. There he painted the picture which hung in the organ-room; once more he returned to Falcontree Hall to place it on the wall; and then retired again to the Low Countries, where he died. The picture was supposed to represent more or less accurately the closing scene of his married life, an unhappy drama enough if it did so close. The background shows the room wherein the picture hangs seen by moonlight; an old oak-panelled room, to which there clung even in later times a faint savour of bygone days: a reminiscence of the past seemed to float about its walls, an atmosphere of lace and ruffles, of heavy silks and drooping curls, a far-off echo from the rustle of flirting fans and the clank of jealous swords. The ghosts of cavaliers and Court ladies seemed to bow and bridle in its dark corners. In the foreground of the painting are three figures, two men and a woman habited in the costume which has been rendered familiar through Lely's and Kneller's portraits. One of the male figures was ascertained by reference to contemporary pictures to be a portrait of Lord Falcon; he stands with a drawn and blood-stained sword over the other, writhing in his death-agony on the ground. The woman, probably intended for Lady Falcon, stands a little back, in an attitude indicating a mingled triumph and despair. Her hands are stretched towards the dying man, presumably her lover, in a gesture part caressing, part shrinking; and on her face is an expression difficult to describe, so much is there in it of horror, so much also of a fierce joy. This was strange, and there was also something strange in the look of the dying man, whose eyes, expressing all the terror and remorse that can be crowded into a man's last moments, were turned, not to Lord Falcon, not to the injured husband who had just dealt him his death-blow—a well-merited punishment, it may be, for his crime—but to Lady Falcon, the partner of that crime. Had they been turned to her in love, in pity, even in reproach, their direction might have been easily understood, might well have been the last direction in which his heart might have guided them: but they were not so turned. They looked

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towards her with an expression of bitter, hopeless misery, of vague and sudden horror, such as may be seen on the face of a man struggling with some overpowering nightmare, which chills his blood and draws cold drops of sweat to his brow, and who wakes to find his vision true. Such a look might have been seen on his face had the thrust that pierced his life out come from the hands of the woman whom he had loved, and who had loved him, instead of from the hands of the man whom he had dishonoured. The only explanation offered for this peculiarity was in one of the least credited rumours current concerning the event, according to which Lady Falcon, either by an impulse of weariness or despair, or by some unhappy mischance, had herself betrayed her lover to her husband's vengeance. Whatever the details of the fact might be, there was no doubt that it led to Lord Falcon's separation from his wife, and to his living and dying abroad. Nor was there any doubt that it led also to the attaching of an ill-repute to the room in which the picture hung. There were stories, disregarded at first as the idle tales of idle servants who had nothing better to do than to invent them, of mysterious sounds coming from the organ-room, of stately marches and heart-rending symphonies played by some invisible hand issuing from the unused key-boards. This music, it was said, by its wondrous power and skill drew the whole household to listen to it with hushed voices and hardly-drawn breath, until the unseen fingers struck some notes so penetrating, so appalling in their discord that by a common impulse those who heard them gazed on one another in dumb horror, as though they had listened to the voice of a fiend, and parted in affright. The diabolical harshness of the closing notes seemed to the guilty to recall and bring to light crimes that they had long thought buried out of sight, forgotten even by themselves; to the innocent, it opened a view of horrors which until then they had never imagined, which had been until then beyond or below their range of vision, from the suggestion of which they fled immediately, hoping vainly to escape even its remembrance. This ghastly music, as the story went, had been heard once by the successor of that unfortunate Earl who was supposed to have avenged his slain honour by the slaying of its destroyer, and so soon as he had heard it he set his seal on the organ-room whence it came, shut up the house, and spent the rest of his life far from his ancestral home. And partly from indolence, partly from habit, partly because Falcontree was a place wherein there was but little excitement to be found, his successors had in a great measure followed his example, coming down only at rare intervals and for short periods to the Hall, and never disturbing the seal set on that room which was said to have been the scene of a fearful tragedy. Thus the village of Falcontree, where, as has been said, even in the nineteenth century, when superstition is so discredited, some superstition lingers, was not

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a little disturbed at the intelligence which reached them that Lord Falcon and his young wife intended to re-open and reside in what the inhabitants regarded as an accursed house.

The terror of the Hall's grim story, dim and vague though it was through lapse of time, hung over them still. The opening of the house was bad enough, but when orders arrived that the seal of the organ-room should be broken, the picture cleaned, and the organ restored, for which latter purposes Lord Falcon had men, regarded by the natives as agents of evil, sent down from London, a universal shudder ran through the village, from the house that touched the manorial woods on the top of the hill to that which opened straight on the sea-beach at the bottom. During the process of restoration and addition the creaking pedals and rusty pipes of the organ gave out many a groan and shrieking note as of anguish at being awaked to remembrance, which never failed to make the old housekeeper's cheek pale and her step falter, while she murmured a prayer of preservation from evil. She and the gardener, who had grown grey in tending the flowers which were never seen by their possessor, as indeed all the servants, were agreed upon this point. "I can't scarcely think its true now, Mrs. Thornton," would Gillie, the gardener, say to her, "what they were telling down along, that the young Lord's going to open the organ-room again. Why, old Howard tells as he's heard the ghost many a time when he's been coming through the grounds after nightfall, and he's so true a man as ever I see." And Mrs. Thornton, bending graciously from her lofty respectability to old Gillie, privileged by age and long service to address her on equal terms, would reply: "I do hope, Mr. Gillie, as it mayn't be true. I read on the paper the other day that the young Lord's on his way home, so I may expect a letter with orders from him before long. But won't you please to come in and take a glass of wine?" And then the two would discuss together the evil results that would follow the young Lord's rash act, dwelling on all the ghostly stories they could find in their memories with delighted horror, until they saw phantoms in every shadow of Mrs. Thornton's room, and heard the sound of the organ in every gust of the sea-breeze. Surely, they agreed, such a thing as the young Lord was about to do was no less than a direct temptation of Providence; and Providence, they implied, would not be slow in yielding to that temptation. But Cecil, thirteenth Earl Falcon, like Gallio, cared for none of these things. He laughed himself in his stately way at the ideas of horror attaching to Falcontree Hall, but he tried in vain to induce his housekeeper and tenants to sympathise with his laugh. He had chosen to reside for some time at Falcontree Hall for several reasons, not the least powerful among which was the desire to banish the superstitious awe with which it was invested. Besides this, he wished to be in some place of picturesque associations, where he could

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indulge his musical broodings and give them completion, and he hoped lasting life in the oratorio already begun. Also he thought the fresh soft air from the sea would be good for Lilith, who seemed somewhat worn and wearied by the fatigue and excitement of their travels. Their tour had been successful and pleasant; he had loved her at its conclusion better, if that were possible, than before. Her wayward nature, which had come out with some strength on one or two occasions, had but served to endear her to him, both by the variety which it gave to her attractions, and by the strength of will which he thought he detected underneath it. She had many moods, no doubt, but in all of them Falcon adored her equally; whether she smiled joyously at him and petted him with childlike caresses, or whether she frowned, and pouted, and rewarded all his efforts to please her with hard words, spoken half in jest, half in earnest, he was at all moments ready to do her bidding. It was certainly excusable in him that he should like to watch her admiringly as she flitted from room to room of the old house when they came down to Falcontree Hall. All the graceful lightness of her nature, all the charm of her quick girlish merriment came to the surface as she tripped rapidly from chamber to chamber while Falcon kept pace with her in his long stride. She peeped into all the dark corners, opened all the doors which had not for years been touched by so light a hand, not perhaps since the hand of the unhappy lady who figured in the picture had been laid upon them. She explored all the ancient recesses of the house with the fresh thoughtless delight of a child who is pleased with a new toy, making all sorts of witty, pretty, laughing comments as she went. But when they reached the organ-room, and trod the planks on which many years ago a terrible death scene had been enacted, a cloud seemed to come over her mirth; her laughter ceased, and her mouth drooped at the corners, as she stood looking round her with a perplexed, pained expression, and said presently,

"Cecil! do not laugh at me; you know my superstitious nature, the sympathy which I have with what I call the supernatural, in spite of your contempt; that sympathy tells me that there is something evil in this room."

Falcon certainly had no such sympathy: yet knowing the tendency of his wife's mind to mystic imaginations and terrors, he had carefully hidden from her the fact that any story of ghostly import belonged to Falcontree Hall. In spite of himself, in spite of the habit of thought which led him to look upon such tendencies in most cases with contempt—in the case of Lady Falcon with affectionate pity—he was disagreeably surprised, even shocked, at the rapidity with which she had fallen into the spirit of superstition which seemed to hover darkly about the house. He had disliked much the task of concealing from her the story of the Hall, which he had regarded as a deception

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necessary in order to prevent the unpleasant associations of the place from working upon her nerves; now he feared for a moment that the deception might in the end prove useless. But his will, trained by long custom, exerted itself to dispel this transient uneasiness, and he replied to her with his kind, grave smile, "What should there be evil in the room, little kitten? Not you or I, surely. It has not been opened for long, and the dust of I know not how many years has accumulated in it, and perhaps clings to it, and makes it noxious still. But when the windows have been left open for a few more days all that will pass off, and it will be a pleasant habitable room enough."

While Falcon spoke thus, and threw the windows wide open, his wife's attention had been caught by the picture, and as he looked round he saw her gazing at it intently, with a strange look of fascination and dislike, of disgust and attraction, expressed in her wide steady eyes, in her parted lips, and in her frowning brow.

"Cecil!" she said, "what is this picture? Has it not a story, a dark story attached to it? I am sure it has. There is a fascination and a horror about it. It is the kind of picture that papa might have done, only he would never have painted anything with so little relief in it. I am certain it has a history. What is it?"

"A history, my pet?" replied Falcon, whose recent sense of uneasiness began to return to him. "What history should there be? It was painted, hung up, grew dirty, has been cleaned. What is there in that which might not be the history of all pictures that have been painted since the world began?"

"No, no, no!" she cried, tapping her foot impatiently upon the ground. "This picture is not like all others; it has a story of its own, I am sure, and you must tell me that story," she added imperiously. Then changing her tone, she said in an appealing voice, "Darling, won't you tell me? I do so want to know!"

To this appeal Falcon gave in, in spite of his resolve to keep the dark legends of the house from his wife; perhaps he was not sorry to rid himself of the notion that he was deceiving her, concealing anything from her, however unimportant that thing, however strong his reasons for concealing it might really be. Probably under any circumstances he would have succumbed even to a less entreaty from his adored Lilith. Now he told her as shortly as he could what were supposed to be the facts of the story.

"That cavalier, standing up with the drawn sword, is one of my ancestors," he said.

"He is not quite handsome enough for that," said Lilith, putting her hand on his arm, and resting it there; "but never mind."

"The lady is his wife, and according to the legend, the other cavalier is her lover. The husband is supposed to have surprised their

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secret, and dealt with its punishment swiftly and surely, as you see. There have been all kinds of idle tales about the events and their subsequent consequences: tales which I have never thought it worth while to inquire into, and about which I trust you will never trouble your little head."

During the latter part of Falcon's recital, Lilith's hand had slipped from his arm, and she seemed to concentrate all her attention on the picture.

"What can the painter have meant by that look in her face?" she said presently, half to herself, "what is the meaning in her eyes? It is not wholly grief, and it cannot surely be joy. I cannot explain it, but I must know some day." Then turning round to Falcon, and banishing without any apparent effort the thoughtful mood into which she had fallen, she said, "It is a clever picture and a dear old room, and a fine old organ, I am sure, and I was a little fool to dislike it, wasn't I? Come, sit down and play to me, darling. Or shall we wait until the room has been aired, and all gloomy fancies swept out of its corners? Come then and walk in the garden, and we will look down to the sea and wonder what makes it so restless, and we will play to-morrow, or next day. Come, dear."

And she tripped out of the organ-room, followed by Falcon, as gaily as she had tripped out of all the others.

Chapter VI.

A few afternoons later Mrs. Thornton, the housekeeper, not without many anxious shakes of the head, and many liftings of the hands in sorrowful forebodings, announced that the organ-room was quite fresh, "as fresh at least," she said, "as such a room can ever be. Ah! my lord! if you would but think over it before you stay in such a room. Ah! my lady! if you could but persuade his lordship."

But Falcon only frowned at her remonstrances, and Lilith laughed gaily and said, "But Mrs. Thornton, I don't believe the room is really different from any other room—not that I am at all sure of that really," she added, in an undertone to Falcon. Mrs. Thornton went croaking away to enjoy a debauch of evil prophecy with old Gillie, the gardener, and Lilith led the way with the fleeting run which she affected into the organ-room, whither Falcon followed her. She was in a mirthful happy humour that day, and she caught him by the hand as they entered the room saying, "Now, dear, I shall look on this day as the birthday of your oratorio, which is going to be so good, so good! And when I hear it sung and played to listening masses of people, I shall be so proud of my Falcon! Not that I can be any prouder of him than I am now." Then she led him up to the keyboard, and laying her tiny fingers on his shoulder, stood

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listening and attentive as he struck some powerful chords. So she remained until he had played four or five bars, and then she cried, "Cecil, what a magnificent tone! is it not?"

A glow of delight had come into Falcon's face as he recognised the power and beauty of the instrument which he played, and now he was too much absorbed to answer her except by a nod, from which she turned away with a little pout of petulance as if to leave him. But the subtle charm of the swelling chords was too strong for her, and held her seated at the window looking seawards as Falcon played on and on. He played, and she, with an unusual patience, remained to listen until warmer tints began to show themselves in the clouds, first by streaks and patches, and then with a sudden glory of colour which changed to green, to orange, to purple, to all sorts of delicate shades for which art has no name, and of which Nature alone possesses the jealously-guarded secret. Then the white-crested waves rolling heavily in from the broad Atlantic caught the glow from above and swung it from one to the other until the whole bay, sea and sky, shone with the short-lived splendour. And the music called out from the organ by the player's skilful fingers seemed to Lilith's vivid fancy to join in the universal exultation; the harmonies rolled in greater fulness through the room; they seemed to have acquired suddenly a sense of freedom and delight in spreading themselves far and wide. It was as if a great river of melody had been dammed up years ago by the closing of the organ, and were now rushing out in a burst of joy at the opening of the flood-gates. As the music pealed on, and the deepening twilight lent it a yet more solemn effect, the associations of the place recurred to Lilith's mind as she listened. She imagined that with the melodies the spirits which had haunted the room were once more set free, and that their voices mingled with the deep tones swelling round the old oak panels. Now as Falcon struck a powerful major chord she seemed to hear a pæan of triumphant joy, of exultation in new found life and liberty: then as the major changed to the minor came mourning and grief, and passionate regret, mingled with pity for the rash hand which had broken the spell. And again, in a passage of descending semitones, she seemed to hear mocking laughter and fiend-like joy at renewed opportunities and hopes of working evil. So strongly did these twilight fancies affect Lilith's quick sensibility that she rose from her seat to banish them, and walked up to the picture. Falcon ceasing a few minutes later to play, and looking round, found her gazing at it with rapt attention.

"Studying the picture again, my pet?" he said.

"I am trying to make out that expression in the woman's eyes," she replied. "What is it like? I think it is the kind of look one might see in a tamed tiger that had suddenly tasted blood and

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resumed its old wildness. Ah!" She gave a little shudder and passed her hand before her eyes as if to shut out the impression produced upon her by the picture.

"My darling!" said Falcon, "I shall begin soon to think that there is really some evil fascination about that picture, and have it taken down."

"No, no, no!" she replied, "dear Cecil, on no account have it taken down; it interests me and gives me a continual puzzle for my little head. What can that look really mean? I must find out."

Lord Falcon returned to the organ the next day, and the next. Every time he touched its keys he seemed to draw out more and more its forgotten fulness; every time he left it he longed more to return to it; the joy of making it give out its volumes of sound became an absorbing interest, a passionate longing which he could not resist. Nor did he wish to resist it, for the tones of the organ seemed to stimulate his power of creating music to its utmost extent. Sweeter and stronger harmonies came into his mind. His faculty of composing gained force as it were, from the keys as he touched them. So remarkable indeed was the effect of the instrument that he said jestingly to Lilith one day, "I really shall believe soon that there is some occult power in this room; it seems to inspire one with new ideas. What do you think, my kitten?"

But Lilith only shook her head gravely.

He had been afraid at first of her resenting his devotion to his oratorio, of her grudging the time which he might otherwise have given to her; but she encouraged him in his work, and told him from time to time how great would be her pleasure in his success. For many days she would come into the room while he was playing or composing, would flit about with a lightness which could not disturb him, encourage him with a swift caress as she passed him, stop for a minute before the picture and fix upon it one of her penetrating glances, perhaps sit down and look awhile at the sea-view, and then flit out again as lightly as she had come in. Gradually, however, as the days went on, she began to exhibit occasional fits of petulance at Falcon's constant devotion to his music, fits for which she always begged forgiveness with the pretty repentance of a spoilt child; but she came by degrees less frequently into the organ-room, and began to take drives by herself about the country. Lord Falcon noted the growth of this weariness on her part of his music, and felt that he could not be either surprised or indignant at it. It cannot be a source of unfailing interest to watch the slow progress of a work intelligible only to its creator, however deep may be one's attachment to that creator; least of all could such an employment be an enduring attraction to a person of Lilith's restless nature. Her husband, however, was unable or unwilling, or both, to break away from his work just at

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the time when he felt it expanding into beauty and life; and so he set about to devise some means of finding amusement and occupation for her until his task was completed. He abandoned at once the idea of asking a party into the house, for the attention which he would feel bound to pay them would disturb him in his studies. While he was musing over the difficulty, the thought of Arthur Vane came into his mind, and seemed to answer all the requirements of the case. Arthur was just intimate enough both with him and Lilith to make his presence in the house in no way a disturbing influence; he sympathised to a great extent with both of their tastes; Lilith had always seemed to like him; how then could he do better than ask Vane down for some little time? Accordingly he wrote off an invitation to Vane, and went to inform Lilith of what he had done.

She received the intelligence strangely. "What!" she cried, "you have asked Arthur Vane here without consulting me? Why did you do it?" she asked in a threatening tone, while she frowned at him.

"You used to like him," said Falcon, quietly.

"Have you forgotten," she said, "that Arthur Vane tried to come between you and me; tried to warn you against me? I have not forgotten it." Then she stood for a little while motionless with the same lost look in her eyes which had come into them on the day of Lord Falcon's proposal, a look as of one gazing far from the present into a dark future. Then recovering her gay manner, she turned to Falcon and said, "But I will forget it, dear. It was kind of you to ask him, and we will try to make it pleasant for him." So saying she tripped away, leaving Falcon somewhat mystified by her behaviour. But he was accustomed to be mystified by her, accustomed to her waywardness, and thought very little more of it.

Arthur Vane at this time was beginning to be wearied of London: almost all his friends had left it, and why he had not done so also was a puzzle to himself. Perhaps it was the interest which he took in Mr. Langenheim's pictures which had detained him as much as anything else; he liked to sit and watch the painter's practised hand at work, to listen to his shrewd, biting remarks, and turn over his portfolios of poetical sketches. Most of all he liked to lie lazily stretched on a couch in a cool corner of the room, so situated that the Queen Mab picture was before his eyes. As he gazed at it all kinds of fanciful stories came into his head, and these he always intended to work up into something worth writing, but that intention he never fulfilled. However, the studio was a never-failing attraction to him; and now that he was deprived of this by Mr. Langenheim's absence abroad, he felt that the time had come when he must go away somewhere. Oddly enough, invitations to two or three houses where he had always enjoyed himself before seemed to him now to augur nothing but dullness and insipidity, and he declined them one after

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another, in a vague hope or desire that he might receive one which should seem to him attractive and worthy of acceptation. Such an one he found, after having wearily turned over many other communications which lay on his table, in Lord Falcon's letter, which ran thus:

"DEAR ARTHUR,—Can I persuade you to come down and see us here for some time? I warn you that you may find it dull. We are quite alone, and there is no excitement to be got out of the neighbourhood. But you will find plenty of subjects for sketches or verses, and by coming you will give us both a great pleasure.

"Ever yours,

"FALCON."

"The very thing!" said Arthur to himself. "I have long been thinking I should like again to see dear Falcon and his wife. I wonder if she is changed since her marriage: I should think not. As to Falcon, I do not suppose anything would change him. I wonder if he's hard at work at his oratorio? Of course he is—there is an organ in the house. I wonder if she gets tired of it; it will be strange if she does not sometimes. However, the best way to satisfy all these wonders will be by going down."

It is more than probable that it was really a hope of receiving this particular invitation which had induced Vane to reject various others, although he did not acknowledge that fact to himself. At any rate, it was a peculiar circumstance that he should pass over several which promised all sorts of gaieties in which his heart was accustomed to delight, in favour of one which foretold nothing but quiet domestic life. However that might be, he wrote to accept it, and arrived a day later than his letter at Falcontree Hall.

He was received warmly by Falcon, and, to his surprise, somewhat shyly by Lilith. She hardly looked at him as he shook her hand, which did not return the friendly pressure of his. This unexpected reserve in her manner produced its effect upon him, and caused him to appear confused and ill at ease as he exchanged greetings with her; but she had entirely recovered her self-possession when, a few minutes after Vane's arrival, they went in to luncheon.

"How has the organ turned out, Falcon?" asked Arthur, presently.

"A perfect treasure," replied Falcon; "it's tone is something wonderful, and the oratorio progresses well with its assistance. We will go into the organ-room after luncheon, and you shall tell me what you think of the instrument."

Vane was assenting to this, when Lilith interrupted him by saying. "Not this afternoon, Cecil; it is too fine a day to be spent in-doors; I will show him the garden and grounds if he likes, and you shall play to us this evening after dinner."

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"Ah, yes! that will be better," replied Falcon. "The fact is, that I get so absorbed in my music sometimes that I forget that it has not quite the same fascination for others which it has for me. Art is a tyrannical mistress, and her votaries are apt to serve her too well, perhaps. I shall have finished the first part of my oratorio before long, I hope, and then I will take a holiday. And now let us go and stroll in the garden."

The three started together, but Falcon left the others before long to go back to the organ-room. Vane, left alone with Lilith, felt a return of the embarrassment which he had felt at her reception, and after a short silence which seemed long to him, found nothing better to say than these somewhat fatuous words: "I have not seen you since we met at Mrs. Montague's ball."

"No," she replied, addressing him without any trace of the coldness which she had at first infused into her manner. "I remember that it was rather a nice ball. I had almost forgotten the existence of such things until you spoke of it. We are so remote from all gaieties here."

"You do not find it dull?" he asked, gently.

"Dull? No. There is much to see in the country round, and I like the quiet of our life, I think. Still," she said, with that confiding look which Vane remembered well. "I am not always good company for myself, and Falcon spends nearly all his days over his music. But now that you have come you will amuse me and talk to me, will you not? I wonder what we were talking of when we last met?"

"I remember, perfectly," said Vane, "we were interrupted in the middle of an interesting discussion on one of your favourite subjects—the supernatural. A purposeless kind of discussion at best, I am afraid."

"I do not like to think that," she said. "Are you convinced that there is nothing in it after all?"

"No, I am by no means convinced," he replied. "Sometimes I incline to think that there is too much in it, which comes to the same thing as nothing."

"It is the other end of the circle you mean?"

"Yes, or the same end—whichever you prefer to call it."

"You know, I suppose, that we have got a kind of haunted room here?" said Lilith.

"I have often heard of the story," he replied; "I should like to see the room."

"We will see it in the evening," she said, "not now, it is so pleasant out here in the sun. Besides, Falcon is hard at work in the room at his music. Listen! Do you not hear the sound of the organ? Or, perhaps, it is not Falcon, but the ghost who is playing it. I have never heard the ghost, but sometimes I feel as if it were

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in the room. It is a large dark room, and I cannot help fancying at times that there is some evil unseen presence hovering in its recesses. A foolish fancy, is it not?" she asked, looking up at him.

"A very natural one at all events in a room of that kind," he replied. "Falcon would set it down to nervousness, and I suppose he would be right. One cannot always resist such fancies, however. But here is no darkness, with the bright sun and the flowers, and"——

"Yes," she said, interrupting him. "Do you like flowers? Will you get me that rose? Thank you. How sweet it is! See!" She held it up for him to smell as she spoke, and then said, "Shall we go in?"

In the evening they all repaired to the organ room, and after Vane had duly admired the tones which Falcon drew from the instrument, Lilith, turning to her husband, asked him to hold up a light to the picture in order that Vane might inspect it. As the two men stood beneath it, she looked from it to them with an intense watchfulness. "I should like very much to hear your version of that story," she said presently to Arthur; "it is capable of many interpretations."

"I must study it more before I can venture to explain it," said Vane.

"Lilith has studied it most closely," said Falcon, "and I do not believe she has arrived at any satisfactory explanation yet."

"Not yet, not yet," she said, dreamily; "but I will understand it some day. And now, Cecil, put out the lights, and let us see how ghastly the room looks in the moonlight." Falcon, smiling at her fancy, extinguished the lights, and the room was illuminated only by the rays which came in through the deep window. The beams fell in a direct path through the panes on to the floor in front of the picture, leaving the rest of the room with its heavy furniture and panels in darkness, which partly concealed the two men. Lilith, standing motionless in her white dress in the moonlight, recalled memories of Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep, of phantoms and spirits, of everything that was uncanny, while the faint moaning of the sea, heard far beneath the windows, added to the weird effect. "Ah!" she said, presently, with a little shudder, "it is horrible, is it not? Let us go away."

As Lilith said good night to Vane at one end of the long drawing-room, while Falcon stood looking out into the night through the window at the other, she added, "Do you know that I have borne some malice towards you for some time?"

"Towards me! For what?" he inquired.

"I heard of your visit to Falcon, when you tried to warn him against me," she replied, "and I was very angry with you."

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Vane was taken aback at this speech, and his usual readiness of answer deserted him. He began a kind of confused apologetic explanation, which she cut short by saying, "I have forgiven you now, and so it does not matter. Only I felt impelled to tell you that I had rather hated you once. Now we are friends again, are we not?"

"Friends, always," he answered.

That night Vane had many dreams, in which the past and present were strangely mixed, and in which Lilith appeared under many guises.

Chapter VII.

Life at Falcontree Hall now went smoothly on for a week or two in a well-ordered groove. The three occupants of the place seemed to make a singularly harmonious party. Vane's intimacy with Lilith increased every day; he found it delightful to listen to her idle talk and laughter, and admire her graceful movements; nor was it less delightful to find her in a serious mood, when she would plunge recklessly into discussions of the most abstruse subjects, and break off with her pretty laugh when she found herself far out of her depth. In all moods she was charming; most charming, perhaps, because she had so many. Falcon, while these two went out sailing or riding together, worked with renewed vigour at his music, and looked with expectant pleasure for their praise or criticism of what he had done when they returned. One who had watched the tenour of their life for a few days from the outside would certainly have said, "Here is a wonderfully happy combination of the things which make life most happy—devotion from an artist to his art; from a husband and wife to each other; from a friend to friends." Yet Vane, in spite of the happiness which he found in this life, began, after a few weeks had elapsed, to make propositions for bringing his visit to a close, propositions which were invariably put aside by Falcon. "What reason can you have for going, unless you are tired of us?" he would say. "You have no other engagements at present; and I think you know by this time that we are not likely to get tired of you. Bear with us a little longer yet; I cannot afford to lose your criticisms. Come and tell me what you think of my last chorus."

And Vane could allege no reason for hastening his departure, although, no doubt, there was a reason. But it was one which he dared not acknowledge to himself, for he felt that if he gave form and expression even in his own mind to his secret thought, he must at once and for ever give up a companionship which had grown very dear to him. Thus much he could not help feeling with regard to this thought which he had half consciously managed to hide away so

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carefully in the recesses of his mind that only now and again its ill-favoured head started up and forced itself for a moment upon his attention. It is dangerous work this hiding away of feelings which may be of serious import. Such a man as Falcon would have crushed a dangerous idea entirely and altogether, or would have taken such steps that its influence could no longer affect his actions: Vane, wanting the strength for this, fled himself before his feeling, instead of banishing it by the power of his will; and in his flight he was pursued surely if slowly, until one day he was fairly overtaken. He was talking with Lilith in the afternoon on the terrace, admiring the view far away and the flowers close at hand. She pointed to one of these, and said, "Is not that a splendid rose? He towers so high above the others, and looks down upon them with such supreme contempt."

"He is indeed fine. What is he called?"

"Géant de Bataille. John of Battle, as my gardener always calls it; an appropriate name, is it not? Do you attach importance to names?"

"In a way I do. I am always inclined to attribute certain qualities to certain names, and if I know the name of a person I have never seen, I draw a portrait of them for myself to fit the name. For instance, I always fancy Katie fair and flirting; Jack, jovial and amusing; Helen, dark and stately; Arthur, weak and irresolute, and so on."

"I do not think you are weak," she said, answering his unasked question. "Tell me what portrait you fitted to my name."

"I knew you and your name together," he replied.

"Ah, true!" she said. "And now you know us both better, do you not? It is a strange name, Lilith, is it not? Do you like it? Liking should grow with knowledge; will yours do so, I wonder?"

She looked at him inquiringly, with a smile on her lips and in her eyes, which tempted Vane to say suddenly and with energy, "I could not possibly like you more than I do now."

The words had no sooner escaped him than he wished them unspoken, but Lilith appeared not to notice that they had any special significance, and only replied by her little purring laugh, with which she led the way into the house. Vane went up to dress for dinner, and sat down in his room in a kind of despair. For now the thought that he had so carefully avoided seeing face to face had met him with a sudden shock in its full hideousness. Now he began to reproach himself bitterly for the persistence with which he had masked it beneath the smooth pleasantness of his daily life, even while he had heard many warning voices telling him of the passion smouldering in his breast, and would not listen to them. Even so he thought had the Pompeians of old heard in vain the threatening groans bursting

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from the bosom of the ground to tell them of the fire raging within it; none the less had they in the reckless daring born of idleness and indulgence sung and danced in mad gaiety, refusing to look further than the crust of pleasant earth which lay between their careless feet and the fury of flame which presently broke forth and destroyed them. And now the crust was broken between him and his passion. No longer he could blind himself to the fact that he loved Lilith; no longer he could doubt that loving her he must fly from her at once, ere he stained his honour with a further confession or a hint of his love. Now he saw with terrible clearness of vision, as though some screen that had kindly shaded his eyes from a blaze of lurid light had been suddenly torn away, not only that he loved her now but that he had loved her ever since he had seen her; that what he had taken for interest was growing admiration; what he had taken for friendship was passion. There was no doubt that he must leave Falcontree Hall at once: the longer he remained the greater would be his difficulty, and he had already stored up sufficient bitterness for his future. He must invent some excuse for his immediate departure; that would not be altogether easy, but some plan he must hit upon. He shrank from the thought of confiding in Falcon as a last and desperate resort; he had not the courage to expose his weakness, unless it became absolutely necessary; besides, such a confession would only make Falcon unhappy, and why should he inflict any part of his own unhappiness on his friend? He wondered if Lilith in any way suspected his secret. He could not think that she did; it was probable that she liked his companionship, would be sorry to lose it, and imagined that he entertained no stronger feeling for her than that of the friendship which she extended to him. Otherwise she could not have received with so much indifference the declaration which he had made to her that afternoon in the garden. From such harassing reflections as these Vane was aroused by the necessity of descending to dinner, where he bore himself with a gaiety which, as is usual when one feeling is assumed to disguise another, was somewhat overstrained. His disquietude was increased, moreover, by the consciousness that Lilith, without appearing to do so, was watching him with considerable attention, surprised perhaps at his unusual flow of spirits. After dinner they went into the organ-room, where Vane found repose from the strain upon his nerves in listening to the music which soothed his troubled mind. Falcon played the work of a great master, full of majestic peace, and Vane hearing was lifted for a few minutes out of the turmoil and misery of this careworn world into the rest and might of a higher one, a world of divine inspiration, of high aims fulfilled—of noble ends attained. This period of quiet did not last long however, for Lilith, coming over to where he sat, said, "Will you come out on the terrace? It is such a lovely moonlight."

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Vane started, and all the trouble came back to his mind in an instant. He felt that far the best and wisest thing he could do would be to invent some excuse for refusal, but his nerves were unstrung by the struggle in his heart, and no excuse would rise to his lips. Besides, it was so hard to give up the last chance of seeing her, and listening to the music of her voice. Surely, he thought, no harm could come of it; he had enough self-control to conceal his feelings; they would talk and laugh as if there were nothing to trouble either of them, as they had many a time talked and laughed before. He would say good-night to her for the last time in an unmoved voice, and the next morning his dream would be over: he would leave Falcontree Hall and learn to bear his burden as best he might. As he arrived rapidly at this conclusion, she said again, "Are you coming?" and he rose silently and followed her. Arrived on the terrace, he found that he had a little overrated his self-command, which had been already tried severely; he found it impossible to begin at once the sort of lightly touched conversation which he had suggested to himself. So they stood a short space silent in the moonlight, by the low wall which separated the garden from the cliff sloping down to the sea.

In accordance with that strange inconsistency of human nature which calls trifles to the surface of men's minds when violent passions are tearing them in their depths, Vane found himself thinking how dangerous the place might be to any one ignorant of the depth beneath or careless in his movements. There was indeed, as has been said, a rugged path leading down the cliff, but any one who missed this would be in considerable danger. As Vane peered idly over the wall, Lilith broke the silence by saying, in a soft sympathetic tone, "I want you to tell me what it is that troubles you." This was certainly the last question which he had expected to be asked; it took him completely by surprise, and redoubled his difficulty. He stood astonished and speechless, and she went on. "I have seen a change in you for some days past, to-day especially. I know the expressions of your face well, and I am sure there is something on your mind; do tell me what it is. You have put so much confidence in me, and we have grown to know each other so well. We are great friends—real friends, are we not? and it is the business of friends to help each other in their troubles. Cannot I help you?"

He made no answer save by bending his head in mute sorrow, and she continued, this time in slow and faltering accents: "I have thought sometimes—as you will not tell me your thought, I must tell you mine—that I may be in some way the cause of your sorrow; I who, believe me," (she laid her hand upon his as she said this) "would so willingly save you from any pain. If it so chanced, it would be so much better for me and for you that I should know the truth."

She looked down as she spoke, and he, moving a little way from

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her with a slow, heavy step, ended his long silence, and broke out in speech.

"Why do you torture me like this?" he cried. "Do you not see that your words are true, horribly, desperately true? Do you not see that every one of them stabs me to the heart? Ah, no! how should you? Why should I reproach you with my own madness? But listen—for I must make my confession once and for all. Do you hear the wash and murmur of the waves on the coast below there? As the strength of those waves when they are lashed to fury by the tearing gale, as the endurance of that patient sea through countless years, so are the strength and endurance of my love for you. I know now that this began even from the first moment that ever I saw you. It has gathered force with time. I deceived myself as well as I could; I kept my passion out of my own sight, but it was there just as the latent rage is in those quiet waters. I was mad not to see it, but I loved you too well to confess to myself that I ought to leave you. Ah, well! it would only have brought the end sooner. I have had so much the more of happiness, and now the end, ah, God! the end has come."

So he spoke with a fierce volubility, leaning backwards against the wicket-gate, clutching its rails with his hands, looking at her as she stood motionless, while the tones of the organ came fitfully out through the open door. A cloud had driven across the moon, and he could not see if her face was turned to him, or what expression it wore. He paused for a moment at the end of his wild words of love, and then dropping his voice, and taking a step towards her, he said:

"I have only two more things to say, Forgive me, and Good-bye!"

The clouds swept away, and the moon shone out in the fulness of her cold cruel light as Lilith turned towards him. She was pale, and her lips wore a strange smile. He saw with amazement her hands stretched towards him, he felt his clasped in their warm grasp; a thrill of mad surprise and delight shook him as she lifted her face to his, and drew his down to her. Then, as a cloud obscured the moon once more, and the dying notes of the organ swelled sadly through the stillness, his lips met hers.

(To be concluded in the February number.)

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A Dance after Harlequin.

WHAT may be called the ancient and noble race of Harlequin is extinct. The name still exists; that is to say, dancers of more or less merit have succeeded to the property, and they call themselves by the name of the race from which it descended. In some cases the assumption is as impertinent as Bug's of "Norfolk Howard." Is there any significance, after all, in this name, which has been known for three centuries? There is, at least, a variety of interpretation. Philologists have gone as wild upon it as upon other words, and each thinks all who disagree with him as so many asses.

Let the Society of Antiquaries occupy themselves if they will in trying to discover the original Harlequin. He may have begun with some Sanscrit buffoon. He probably passed through the mimes of Greece and Rome, and developed from the latter into the modern hero of Pantomime. Some peculiarly mad philologists derive his name from Hell-King, and recognise him in Dante. Génin held him to be of the devil, and saw in his patched coat, black mask, and marvellous activity the tongues of fire, the hideous features, and the power of transporting himself from place to place, which characterised the chief of the infernal dominions. Others assert, foolishly enough, that Francis the First gave the name to a buffoon, in ridicule of Charles Quint, his imperial rival. Harlequin Charles Quint! Why, the first name was a well-known Bergamesque term before Charles and Francis were born. Still more absurd is the idea of Ménage, that the appellation was first given to a comedian who was constantly in the company of M. Harlay, and who was, therefore, called "Harlayquin," or little Harlay. Let us see whence Arlecchino came, what he was, and why he was so called.

Catherine de Medicis was a gloomily-minded person, who rather enjoyed being made to laugh. It was a grim expression of relief, and she liked it. In the year 1576, a wandering *troupe* of Italian players crossed from Italy to France, to render laughing solace to this frowning queen. Wanderers? Yes, vagabonds, in that sense. But the men were gentlemen; that is, educated, well-bred men. The women are said to have lacked no grace that might win for them the respect, homage, and affection of all true and honest-hearted men. Andreini was the manager. His wife was the famous Isabella Andreini, famous for her acting, for her learning, and for the honours paid to her at her funeral by the city in which she died. This

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company called themselves "I Gelosi," or "The Jealous"—to please. Their authors supplied them only with plots. The clever artists found the words, which their fancy and intelligence and humour readily supplied nightly. This style was known as the "Commedia dell' Arte."

The two low comedians of this company were known best by their stage names. Pedrolino was Frenchified into "Pierrot," a name which has not yet died out; Simone di Bologna was called "Arlecchino." Most of these Italians had theatrical *aliases*. Silvia Ronchagli was "Franceschina," Maria Antonazzioni was "Bicciolina," "Victoria" was the proud pseudonym of the pretty Antonella Bajardi, Virginia Ramponi was "Florinda," Giovanni Fabri was "Flaminio," and so on.

"Arlecchino," an old provincial Italian word for a lick-dish or greedy fellow (the name indicating the character), was then originally nothing more than an appellation taken up by Simone. His costume when acting the greedy cajoling parts (for Arlecchino was at first essentially a speaking character) was always the same. He wore a patched costume, not uniform and spangled, but of irregular patches. The jacket had wide side pockets. It was tightened round the waist by a girdle, but descended, like a short tunic, over trousers, which fitted tight to the limbs. To these were added gaiters and slippers. Arlecchino was masked. He wore a cap with a hare's tail in it (in place of a feather), and in his girdle was a wooden sword, "bat," or "wand." It was the stupidity and simplicity of the original Arlecchino which excited laughter. His morals and ideas of property were as subversive of social order as those of a modern clown. In course of time he improved; and the laughter he excited was the result of his sharp and bright wit, of his overflowing humour, and the uncommon audacity of his allusions, suggestions, and expressions.

The Gelosi returned to Italy in 1604. They were succeeded in France by another Italian *troupe*, the Comici Fideli. Giovanni Battista Andreini, son of the old manager of that name, was at the head of this company. His professional name was Lelio. His comrades assumed names taken from characters they had played with distinguished success. Just as James Smith called himself Mr. O. (or Obi) Smith, from the laurels he won in delineating the part of Obi, or Three-fingered Jack, so in this seventeenth-century Italian *troupe* Gavarini became known as Il Capitano Renocerante, from the wonderful success of his impersonation of that most swaggering of swaggering captains. So Signor Zeccha was known to the town as Bertolino, Barbiere was Beltramo, Dominico Bruni was Fulvio, and the grave and gracious Diana Ponti was adored under the appellation of Lavinia, the name of a comedy heroine. Of what stuff Giovanni Battista Andreini was made may be gathered from this

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fact: he was the author of a celebrated Scriptural drama, called 'Adamo,' which was played at Milan in 1613. From this celebrated and highly-successful sacred piece Milton is said to have conceived an idea which resulted in that sublime fact, 'Paradise Lost.' There are even some people who say that Milton's poem would never have existed but for Andreini's play. Nay, there are a few who are bold enough to declare that Milton stole the whole of Andreini's drama, and, with little trouble, converted it into the immortal epic that we know of.

There was an old palace in Paris which had formerly belonged to the Dukes of Burgundy, but which had been confiscated when Duke Charles the Bold turned traitor. The hall of this "Hôtel de Bourgogne" was given up to the "Comici Fideli" and to a French company. Arlecchino and his fellows acted on three nights in the week. The French players drew the town on the alternate nights. The Comici left in 1618, but they visited Paris in various succeeding years, when Arlecchino was ever warmly welcomed. They, like the Gelosi, were exempted from the interference of the French bishops. If tradition may be trusted, the Roman ecclesiastical authorities took them under the shield of their protection. The French bishops excommunicated players. The Italian players were exempted from this penalty. It is certain that the actresses were irreproachable in character, and not only they, but many of the gentlemen of the company were rigorous in carrying out all religious observances, and, when necessary, they practised the most severe austerity. In their own country, their social position was among the best in the land. It was often a position of honour even in France. When Barbiere (Beltramo) formed an Italian company, under the patronage of Louis the Thirteenth, that monarch conferred on that light and graceful comedian a captaincy in his Guard of Honour.

We get a very good idea of what the ancient Harlequin was like by studying 'Le Théâtre de Gherardi,' in every piece of which (six volumes of them!) Harlequin is the principal character. At first, the Italians in France played in Italian. It was not till May 1668 that they delighted the French by introducing French scenes and songs, in all of which Harlequin Dominique delighted his audiences, and continued to delight them for twenty years. Harlequin was popular, because he took the liberty of speaking his mind on every possible subject. What the *Gazette de Hollande* would scarcely dare to say, "Harlequin" out with it, and gave an idea of what was meant by freedom of speech.

Harlequin, like 'Punch' (the journal) took every form, but was always Harlequin. He was gross in speech, simile, and story. He was satirical and epigrammatic. He spoke French, sang Italian, and quoted Latin—all fluently and correctly. Occasionally, he drew parallels full of quaint humour; and was never more in his element

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than when he disguised himself as a lawyer and illustrated the ever-abounding rascality of the law. When Chief Justice Cockburn lately raised a hysterical laugh in court, by remarking that "the law swallowed everything," it reminded me of the ancient Harlequin disguised as a judge, and ridiculing Justice by like remarks on the law. Commercial rascality was his constant food for satire. "Of a hundred packages on your shelves," he says to a draper, "all but four are dummies. An ass, the other day, devoured four at your door; for there was nothing but hay in them." So with social fashions; Harlequin was "down upon them" with the vivacity of a light comedian. When Pierrot (as a doctor's wife) is puzzled at Harlequin (disguised as a chambermaid) stating that he had been waiting-woman to a colonel, the motley hero observes that there is nothing extraordinary in it, since ladies had their *valets de chambre*. General Burgoyne had probably read 'Arlequin, Empereur dans la Lune,' for he has a sort of echo of Harlequin's observation in 'The Heiress.' When old Aldscrip sees Chignon, a French hairdresser, dressing his daughter's hair, he exclaims, "Here's a new specimen of foreign women, a *valet de chambre!* Taste for ever! Now, if I were to give charge of my person to a waiting-maid, they'd say I was indelicate!"

Again, Harlayquin had fine subject for raillery in the Madame Rachels of his day, and the women who were willing to buy back youth and beauty at any price. "You'd hardly believe it," says Harlequin to a doctor, referring to the "Rachel" of the hour, "that she has promised to make an old woman of seventy-five beautiful for ever with an ounce of her pomatum!" In the same piece, Harlequin's professional illustrations, as a Medico, are so like those of Sheridan's Dr. Rosy, that we perhaps owe one to the other. "Gentle as a saline draught! Such an arm for a bandage!—veins that seemed to invite the lancet, mouth as round, and not larger, than that of a penny phial; she could decipher a prescription and insert the ingredients as well as myself." There is a good deal like this in 'Harlequin Emperor in the Moon,' with some nasty talk, some vulgar business, and some capital shots at folly; all of which were reproduced by Aphra Behn, in her translation of this piece. Jevon was the famous speaking English Harlequin who helped it to its great success. Pinkethman subsequently acted Harlequin without the mask, but was not half so comic and effective as with it; all his audacity oozed out of him. Bickerstaffe and Spiller succeeded to the part. In 1748 'Harlequin Emperor in the Moon' was revived on Boxing-night at Drury Lane, with the inimitable Woodward as the best and most facetious of speaking Harlequins. Cushing was nothing to him in the same part in the same piece, brought out on the same night at Covent Garden.

Every piece acted by the Italians was nothing less than ferociously farcical in its satire against "shams." In 'Le Chevalier du Soleil'

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the doctors were, so to speak, stripped, rolled in the mud, and danced upon, as the greediest and most ignorant humbugs of the age. Columbine, on the other hand, exposed the very loose morals of the ladies and the consequent exceeding impudence of handsome shopmen who made love to them, over the counter. Some of the old jokes of the Italian farces have served later wits. "Sir," said Scaramouche to Harlequin, "which is the way to the Grève?" "You have only to keep on the road you are going," is the rejoinder, which will recall to mind one of Douglas Jerrold's best-known jokes. In another of these farces, Harlequin alluded to the stage, between the acts, when spectators were admitted to the stage itself. "There is no *Entr'acte.* What do you call those pirouettes, those polite salutations, those warm embraces that the Quality give one another on the stage, while the men are snuffing the candles? I call them scenes of life and continual movement. Ask the Pit. I am sure it will agree with me." The contrasts are striking; for, after some touch that is scarcely removed from beastliness, Harlequin quotes Virgil like a gentleman, and speaks of Plautus and Terence as if he had the whole of their comedies at his fingers' ends. Occasionally, Harlequin, like Billy Black, fired off conundrums at the audience, with a sort of "D'ye give it up?" Here is a sample: "Qui est-ce qui n'est jamais chez lui? C'est le Grand Seigneur, parce qu'il est toujours à la Porte!"

But there was another peculiarity of the Harlequin of the olden time, which has yet to be mentioned.

Harlequin's imitations of popular actors were among the most attractive of his performances. There was a famous parody on the scene between Rodrigue and Chimène, in Corneille's 'Cid,' which, acted by Pasquariel and Harlequin, made the house mad with delight. Harlequin imitated the famous Mademoiselle de Champmeslé. He did to the life her sing-song, cadenced declamation; her look, dress, gestures. He was almost the famous *tragédienne* in person; and when making his exit, mimicking her peculiar walk and carriage, the pit could not keep its legs, the spectators rolled against each other, weak with excess of convulsive laughter. I think I saw something like it in the wonderfully clever impersonation of Lucrezia Borgia by that excellent actor Mr. G. Honey.

But the parody of 'The Cid' was surpassed in exquisite fun and admirable acting by that of 'Bérénice,' in which Columbine took the part so named, and Harlequin that of Titus. In the preliminary scene, in which Columbine affects to be unequal to the task, she excites the greatest hilarity by her manner of exclaiming—

> "Moi Bérénice! Hé Dieux! par où m'y prendre?
> Aurai-je un port de voix et languissant et tendre?
> Et puis-je prononcer sur le ton langoureux?
> *Si Titus est jaloux, Titus est amoureux.*"

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The last line, which is in the original play, was delivered with Champmeslé's luxurious languor, slightly exaggerated, and people shrieked with delight at the delivery. Harlequin remarked, on beginning the scene, "Je m'en vais effacer Floridor et Baron." Accordingly, he gave imitations of both those great actors, in mock heroics. Floridor was the first French actor who *said*, instead of *sung*, his parts. Baron delivered his verse according to punctuation, not heeding the rhyme. The double novelty made the imitation doubly popular; and there was a universal roar when Columbine concluded with—

> "Pour Titus, empereur, je pleure, je soupire,
> Mais Titus, Arlequin, me fait crever de rire;"

—so it did the whole audience.

One of the causes of the enormous attraction of 'Les deux Arlequins,' first played in 1691 (a charming piece by M. le Noble), was found in a scene in which Harlequin, in a parody on the famous stanzas declaimed by Rodrigue in 'The Cid,' imitated Baron. That illustrious and ever-to-be-regretted actor never had a gesture that was not perfection, and never a perfection that was not miraculous. This is the testimony of the accomplished Harlequin Gherardi, who was the imitator of the grand tragedian on this occasion. Baron had then withdrawn from the stage. One result of this step was that the Italian company, as it was still called, though they played in French, had an increase in their receipts to the amount of twenty thousand francs a year. For when the public could no longer enjoy the pleasure of seeing and hearing Baron, they went in crowds to "The Italians," whenever it was announced that Harlequin would imitate him in one of his most effective characters. It was not mere mimicry, but a perfect copy of a perfect original. Harlequin was so renowned for this especial imitation, that he repeated it, by command, at Versailles, in ordinary evening dress, at the table of Monseigneur le Prince, and in presence of a brilliant company, made up of royal, noble, and gentle blood. When the scene was concluded, the august assembly, princes and princesses included, surrounded the happy Harlequin, loaded him with congratulations, and protested that he wanted nothing of Baron but the features. Modest Gherardi says that their friendship for him perhaps a little blinded their judgments, and that, loving Baron, they too readily recognised the great artist in one who was so much his inferior.

Harlequin did not confine himself to imitations of the French actors. He also imitated the counsellors of the law courts who were conspicuous for good or other quality. So, Mrs. Clive, in Nerissa, used to mimic the leading counsel in Westminster Hall; and the elder Mathews, in 'Love, Law, and Physic,' convulsed the house—till the Lord Chamberlain checked him—by mimicking Lord Ellenborough.

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Had the Tichborne case existed in the old Harlequin era, Harlequin would have tried to outdo Arthur Orton himself in the character of measureless liar, and the harsh exasperating tones of his defender would have made the Hôtel de Bourgogne ring again with joyous recognition.

In 'Arlequin Jason, ou La Toison d'Or,' our old friend not only mimicked the tragedians and the bombast tragedy of the time, but showed his versatility by so close an imitation of the famous ballet-master, Pecour, as to deceive the whole house. Pecour was the lightest and most graceful dancer of the great dancing era. No one equalled him in refinement, activity, variety of action, and perfection of ear, for keeping time. In composing ballets, he was the most superbly imaginative of artists; and every part Pecour undertook himself was to the very life.

Now, who were the men who so long charmed their audiences by a display of qualities which are not now to be found in a single individual? Their names are known as familiarly as those of the kings of Rome—at least, those of the Harlequins of the seventeenth century. They are Locatelli, under the name of Trivelin; Dominique, and the two Gherardis, father and son. Locatelli, in an early version of 'Don Juan,' played the Don's valet, and he used to throw the catalogue of the Don's mistresses into the pit, with a "Look at it, gentlemen. See if you do not find in it the names of your wives, kinswomen, or sweethearts." Dominique for a long time "doubled" Locatelli's parts. As a sample of the old Harlequin, we cannot do better than study the three Dominiques, as they called themselves—Biancotelli was their family name. They were, father and sons, gentlemen, Harlequins, and scholars. With the company that left Italy for France, in 1657, to be the players of Cardinal Mazarin, there was a grave, bashful, handsome lad of seventeen, who, under the name of Dominique and the mask of Harlequin, was to be the delight of the French court and people for about thirty years. Dominique's style, his wit, grace, vivacity, humour, his voice in song, his utterance in speaking, and his power of imitating the great French actors, made him the darling of the town. This quicksilver, laughter-loving and laughter-compelling actor on the stage was the gravest, most nervous, and most reserved of persons away from it. In his professional suit, he seemed to be immortal—as if Death could never catch a creature so slippery and so restless. In his citizen's garb, he looked as if he were about to change it for a shroud.

Dominique was an especial favourite with Louis the Fourteenth. The king conversed with him as freely as he would with a little viscount from Gascony, that is to say, with a proud sort of condescension. When the French comedians protested against the Italians for introducing whole scenes in French into the pieces brought out on the Italian

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stage, in Paris, the king himself sat to judge the cause. The noble old French actor, Baron, pleaded for his fellow French comedians and their rights. Dominique was advocate for the Italians and their claim to use any language. When Baron had made his statement, Dominique bowed to the king, and respectfully asked how his Majesty would have him speak? "Speak in any way you please," replied the king. "Then I have gained my cause," cried Dominique. "It is all I require!" Baron demurred, but the king laughed; and thenceforth the Italians in Paris played in French, whenever they chose to do so. "As for you," said the king to the French actors, "speak Italian, if you like."

This was not the only royal favour vouchsafed to Dominique by the French monarch. Louis le Grand stood godfather to the great Harlequin's eldest son, *Louis* Biancotelli. This little fellow grew out of his little Harlequin suit to become a stage machinist and a dramatic author. The intellect he derived from his father carried this second Dominique to great and deserved eminence. The older Harlequin's son won the knightly order of St. Louis by his services as a military engineer; and when he was dying, at Toulon, in 1727, he held the highly responsible office of Director of the Fortifications of Provence.

At the baptism of old Dominique's second son (Pierre François), there was not as socially great a godfather; but, intellectually, Barbeau, the *avocat au parlement*, was worth a score of *grands monarques*. This *Pierrot*, Dominique Barbeau's godson, was a distinguished scholar in the college of the Jesuits. He excited the greatest expectations of being some day the glory of the company or of the Church. A pair of bright eyes changed his destiny. He first saw them as he was one evening leaving the college, and became desperately in love with her, who used them to excellent purposes. The nymph was the daughter of Pasquariel, the director of an Italian *troupe* of strolling actors, recently arrived in Paris. This young couple were soon married, and Pierre Dominique, recognising a new vocation, instead of becoming an archbishop or a general of Jesuits, turned Harlequin, and took to strolling in Italy. Ultimately, he settled in Paris. The Regent Duke of Orleans took him from the Opéra Comique, of whose audiences he was the spoilt child, and placed him in his new theatre in the Hôtel de Bourgogne. There he made *Pierrot* the character in which the Parisians took never-failing delight. The Dominique intellect declared itself in other ways. Pierre was one of the most prolific of dramatic authors. His parodies of Voltaire's stilted tragedies kept the city in laughter for months, and made Voltaire himself mischievously mad for ever!

This family of Harlequins was distinguished by the piety of its members. The father was the most devout of all the Italian players, all of whom were remarkable for their religious devotion. The

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younger Racine asserts that he knew a married couple in the Italian company who lived like saints, and wore hair shirts under their stage costume! Dominique, the elder Harlequin, was a regular attendant at communion, and could not bear to hear the Church spoken of with disrespect. In his last moments, August 2nd, 1688, all the sacraments of the Church were administered to the dying Harlequin, but he was first called upon by the officiating French priest to promise that he would never play *that*, or any other character again, on the stage. It was a formal renunciation of his worldly profession.

The great Dominique may be said to have died in harness, and almost in presence of the king. The accomplished ballet-master, Beauchamp, had delighted Louis by his dancing on the court stage at Versailles. Immediately after his exit, he appeared from the opposite side, and executed a dance so perfect that the monarch expressed aloud his admiration; but the executant was Dominique, who not only could imitate Beauchamp's manner, but could, by help of paint, resemble him in features. The dance was long, and Dominique, overheated, caught cold while he afterwards stood to hear himself praised. Of this cold the artist died. Harlequin left property to the amount of three hundred thousand livres; and he was buried, with much ceremony, behind the chapel of the Virgin, in the church of St. Eustache. The burial of Harlequin is a subject for a Watteau.

St. Simon praises the wit of Dominique, his readiness at impromptu sayings, the humour of his repartees, and his dignified gravity off the stage. In the St. Victor Library, Dominique charmed the learned men there by his knowledge, scholarship, and modesty. It is said that Dominique taught Harlay action; and wits affirmed that Dominique was a better scholar than Harlay, but that Harlay was a better actor than Dominique.

As a marvellous bit of Harlequin's autobiography, I know nothing that can match with the note which Gherardi has printed at the end of 'Le Divorce,' by Regnard.

"This comedy," says the modestly-impudent Harlequin, "failed in the hands of the late M. Dominique. It was erased from the list of pieces occasionally to be revised, and the parts had been burnt. Nevertheless, I—who had never appeared on any stage in my life, and who was only just leaving the Collége de la Marche, where I had just finished my course of philosophy under the learned M. Hallé—I selected it for my first appearance, on the 1st October, 1689, when I made my début under the patronage of the King and Monseigneur. It had such good fortune in my hands as to give universal satisfaction, and it drew for such a length of time as to be very profitable to the comedians. If I were a man to be vain of the talents which nature has given me for the stage—whether I played masked or unmasked, in the principal parts, serious or comic—where I have been seen resplendent with the applause of the most polished and most knowing nation of the world, I might have here a fine field to satisfy my self-love.

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I might say that I did more in my beginnings and in my youthful years than the most illustrious actors have done after twenty years' practice and in the vigour of their age. But I protest that, far from growing proud of my rare advantages, I have always considered them as the results of good fortune, and not as the effect of my merits; and if anything has been flattering to my soul in these matters, it was in the pleasure of seeing myself universally applauded after the inimitable M. Dominique, who carried so far the excellence of his simplicity—the *naïf*, or what the Italians call *goffagiare*—that whoever saw him play will find something wanting in the most accomplished and renowned Harlequins in the world."

In 1697, the Italian company in France was suppressed and dispersed. But, long before these actors were expelled from France for supposed saucy allusions to Madame de Maintenon, they and their sayings—for they still supplied, or improvised, half their dialogue even after pieces were written for them—were watched, especially in times of political or religious commotion, by the police. In 1689, the French Government and the Pope were at loggerheads. An express order from the king was sent to the Minister of Police, to take heed of the Italian actors generally, and particularly of Bartolomeo Ravieri, whose theatrical name was Aurelio. English-born Ultramontanes are justly looked upon as foreigners whenever questions arise between Ultramontanism and English interests. In such a case, English interests would certainly, however conscientiously, be betrayed. It was rather hard, however, to punish the devout Ultramontane Italian Harlequins, Pierrots, and Scaramouches in France for their Italian church proclivities. All those comic, broadly-speaking, boldly-dancing, grossly-alluding buffo-players were rigorously devout. They ceased to act on Fridays, observed fasts, and attended masses; Arlecchino, Colombina, and the rest of them regularly went to confession. "Let Aurelio be arrested if he says anything ill with respect to the affairs of Rome." Such was the secret police order. Aurelio, with his Ultramontane feelings, no more cared for the laws of the country in which he dwelt than our own Ultramontanes do for those of the country in which they are born. Aurelio played gallant lovers in the curious old half-Italian, half-French (sometimes wholly French) farces acted at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. He could not keep his tongue neutral with regard to politics. He was warned, but monition was thrown away upon him. Aurelio became so impudently outspoken that he was banished from France. The sequel is very curious. Early in life, Aurelio had "studied for the church." In Italy, he resumed his studies. When he had successfully completed his course of theology, the ex-impudent stage lover was ordained priest. The elder Riccoboni knew him well, and had been present when Aurelio performed mass.

In France, Arlecchino was ennobled by Molière into his Scapins and Sganarelles. In Italy, he continued to be an "Asino Berga-

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mesco," as he was in the beginning. He is this in all Goldoni's comedies, where he is introduced at all. When Arlecchino would pass for a gentleman, he disguises himself and tries to talk Tuscan. In France, however, Arlequin has had the greatest vitality, though, of later years, most of his business was assumed by Pierrot. Since Carlin, the best of the line was Debureau, of the Funambules, to which theatre the finest equipages used to be seen rolling, as, in the days of Garrick, carriages flew from St. James's to Goodman's Fields. Debureau united the vivacity of Harlequin with the affected stupidity of Pierrot, and was most famous under the latter name. He had a son, Camille Debureau, who was an accomplished artist as a painter on porcelain, and a promising sculptor when a pupil of the Conservatoire. Camille, however, was ambitious to succeed his father in the old pantomime heroes. When his sire was on his death-bed, in 1847, he adjured his sorrow-stricken son to turn his ambition to better purpose. Camille thought the greatest honour to which he could attain was to support on the stage the glorious name of his sire. The elder man, seeing this fixedness of resolution, said he would give his son a lesson in the almost lost art. The dying Pierrot covered his face with flour, pulled the sheets about him, and went through a bit of pantomimic action which made Camille laugh through the honest tears with which he was half blinded. Camille never equalled his sire; and he died the other day, at Bordeaux, after a long illness, at the age of fifty-four. Paul Legrand has taken up Pierrot; and Vauthier still, I believe, tries to galvanise Arlequin into life; but French speaking-pantomime (and pantomime generally) expired with the real artist in that line, the elder Debureau.

The English names mentioned in a previous page are those of our principal speaking Harlequins. The tone taken by them in England may be judged by a remark of Dryden's: "The joy of a king for a victory must not be like that of a Harlequin upon a letter from his mistress." Prior's 'Merry Andrew' shows that there was a censorship over the speaking mimes at our fairs, and that even a prelate in a coach-and-six could stop in front of a theatrical booth in Southwark Fair, to hear the mimes suggest the satire to which they dared not give expression. There were modest fellows at that fair; and we have a respect for the two Southwark Harlequins who were so horrified by the blasphemous swearing of Lord Sandwich that they ran away in affright. Political satire was not allowed; but the political Harlequins could not be silenced in France. In the year 1745, we read in the *Daily Chronicle*, that the allied armies, after performing various inconsistent and inexplicable movements, retired, without risking either a siege or battle, into winter quarters. The campaign in Germany, in which the King of Prussia was opposed by the veteran Marshal Daun and the Prince of Lorraine, was equally

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void of important results. The French garrison at Lille displayed their wit at the expense of the vacillating manœuvres of the Anglo-Electoral troops. Harlequin was introduced on the stage pompously exhibiting a bundle of papers under each arm. Being asked what he had under the right, he answered, "*Orders;*" and what under the left? with equal solemnity, "*Counter-orders.*"

There is a pretty general idea that Rich, *alias* Lun, was the person who abolished speaking Harlequins and Columbines, and established mute personages in their stead. Rich, no doubt, introduced the mute Harlequin in his own person. He was unable to remember a speech, or to utter one if he could remember it; but, in expressive action, he was as eloquent as the finest speaker. In pantomime he could not only excite breathless interest, or move to laughter; on occasion, Rich could almost melt to tears. He brought in the tight spangled dress long before Byrne's time, to whom the introduction is sometimes assigned. Rich was the Betterton, Garrick, Kemble, and Kean (combined) of mute Harlequins. He had many graceful successors, but never anything like an equal.

Speaking and singing Harlequins survived to very recent times, and one of the last (and perhaps the best) of the speaking and singing Columbines is yet among us, in venerable old age—Miss Kelly. There was something of the old audacity in 'Harlequin Anne Bullen,' which tickled the Jacobites of 1727, at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, with a coronation mocking that of George the Second. In 1741, the erection of the Shakespeare Monument was commemorated in 'Harlequin Student, or the Fall of Pantomime.' Buoyant Yates pattered through Harlequin; and Miss Hippisley warbled Columbine. In 1746, when beheading and hanging were going on, and living Jacobites were prostrate and humiliated, they were satirised in that extraordinary affair, 'Harlequin Incendiary, or Columbine Cameron.' Yates was again the saucy Harlequin, and Kitty Clive was Columbine Cameron, in which one of the noblest men who suffered death for the Stuart cause was caricatured.

In the middle of last century, Harlequin, in England, was almost dethroned by a foreign speaking Columbine. In 1754, Walpole writes thus of a piece that was originally produced in 1725:—"There is started up a burletta at Covent Garden that has half the vogue of the old 'Beggar's Opera' ('Harlequin Sorcerer'). Indeed, there is a soubrette, called Niccotina, who, besides being pretty, has more vivacity and variety of humour than ever existed in any creature." On the English stage, the speaking Harlequin kept to rather old jokes. Witness what Walpole writes to Mann, in 1759:—"I beg, as Harlequin did, when he had a house to sell, that you will send me a brick, as a sample of the first town you take."

In 1759, Drury Lane brought out 'Harlequin's Invasion.' The

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Invasion being of Parnassus. King (the original Sir Peter Teazle) was the rattling Harlequin, who had to tell all the dancing heroes that henceforth Shakespeare, and not *they*, would reign. In 1814, Liston and Miss Kelly were the Harlequin and Columbine in a piece called 'Harlequin Hoax,' which was produced the following year at Drury Lane, with Oxberry as the prattling, singing mime. In the same year, 1814, the Haymarket brought forward three Harlequins in 'Dr. Hocus Pocus, or Harlequin Washed White.' All the personages of the old Italian-French harlequinades were there: Harlequin, squab and black, by Douglas; Harlequin, black and active, by Yarnold; Harlequin, white and hobbling, by Mathews (then lame, through an upset, in which Terry shared, from a gig); Scaramouch, Tokeley, Pierrot, Goneery, and Columbine, that fascinating creature, Mrs. Gibbs. The old original thing was never so nearly brought on to the English stage as on this occasion; and it was eminently successful. The last attempt of the sort was a revival of 'Harlequin's Invasion,' much altered, at Drury Lane, in 1820, when mercurial Harley, as Harlequin, kept the house in a roar with the delivery of the comic things put in his mouth, and Madame Vestris lifted the hearts of all the young fellows, and enchanted the ears of crowded audiences by her exquisite vocalisation. 'The Two Harlequins,' played when the Gaiety Theatre first opened, belonged only to the class of musical operetta, not to the ancient school of Harlequin.

Harlequin, as we now see him, is a poor descendant of Rich; and, far from beating his speaking nameeake from the stage, the latter kept his ground till 1820. Moreover, the modern mute Harlequin is himself almost thrust out of pantomime altogether. He is only tolerated in a few scenes supplementary to a grand extravaganza. The scholars and gentlemen who lèft college to put on the Harlequin's suit have no descendants anywhere. To build up the original Arlecchino on the modern stage would require an artist who combined in his own person the tragi-comic power of Robson, the quaintness of Compton, the imitative faculty of Toole, the ear for music of the Paynes, all the qualities of the Vokes family, the voice of a first-rate vocalist, and a gracefulness in the poetry of motion which is not now to be seen anywhere. That artistic faculty which was once conspicuous in the composition of ballets does, however, exist in the worthy ex-Harlequin, Mr. Cormack; and that gentleman is lucky in having a Grand Monarque in Mr. Chatterton, whose royal liberality enables the great ballet-master to indulge his inventive faculties so freely as to place ballets on the Drury Lane stage with all the grandeur and efficiency which marked those of Beauchamp and Pecour, on the once glorious stage of Versailles.

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The Greville Memoirs.

Rogers once said to a friend, "I do not care to go to the —— house; I am certain to find there a supercilious Greville." The supercilious Greville is no more, but he has left his 'Memoirs,' which are at the present moment delighting and astounding society. Mr. Stapleton, the accomplished secretary of Canning, has written an article in 'Macmillan's Magazine' wherein he states, which we own we are surprised at, that the historical value of the work is small, but the scandal may be amusing to *some*. Amusing to some! Why everybody in Great Britain seems running about to find the book. From the fashionable library in Belgravia to the remotest railway-station bookstall every subscriber is shouting out, "Give us Greville, or we die!" Frantic dowagers who love money much, but scandal more, have been induced to abandon their parsimonious habits and purchase the work; and we are certain none of them will ever be of opinion that their money has been wasted.

Amusing to *some!* What can be more amusing to a loyal people than reading an 'Impeachment of the House of Brunswick,' written by a Greville and not by a Bradlaugh, in which George the Fourth, our "religious and gracious king," is described as a "dog and a beast;" William the Fourth, our "sailor king," as an "ass, buffoon, and blackguard;" the "good Queen Adelaide" as a "hideous, horrid, spotted queen;" the Duke of Cumberland as a "Tarquin;" the Duke of Gloucester as a "fool;" and the Duchess of Kent as a "nuisance."

The great nobles, it is true, are treated a little more kindly; the Duke of Northumberland is only described as "a bore beyond bores." The Duke of Rutland, the Duke of Cleveland, and Lord Lonsdale are gibbeted as personally "the most insignificant of mankind." The Duke of Newcastle and Lord Grosvenor, afterwards Marquis of Westminster, are called "great, selfish, pampered aristocrats;" and Mr. Greville "is glad to see them put to inconvenience."

With respect to Mr. Greville's *friends* on the Turf, with whom he took sweet counsel respecting the state of the odds, they are branded indiscriminately together as "blackguards and fools." Rather hard on the fools, as we believe they contributed materially to Mr. Greville's income during his lifetime.

"Blackguards and fools!" but the betting gentlemen will be consoled when they see that the graduates of Oxford and Cambridge marching up, headed by the solemn dons, to congratulate William

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the Fourth on his accession, are playfully depicted as "academical tagrag and bobtail."

With regard to Mr. Greville's treatment of an inferior, or, as he expresses it, a more "degraded class of society," the following entry will suffice:—

"*London, Feb. 22nd.*—Dined yesterday at Fortunatus Dwarris's, who was counsel to the Board of Health. One of those dinners that people *in that class* of society put themselves in an agony to give, and generally their guests in as great an agony to partake of."

One would think this was punishment enough, but subsequently an additional jujube is administered to the hospitable Fortunatus:—

"*Feb. 27th.*—Laid up ever since *that dinner* at Dwarris's with the gout."

Every one must admit that all classes of society are kicked about with the grandest impartiality.

We also give great credit to Mr. Greville for the unexampled pains he has taken to collect his information. He has cross-examined the wife about the husband, the son about the father, and last, but not least, the valet about his master. Little did the charming Lady Howe, the good-natured "Dolly FitzClarence," and Batchelor, the confidential servant of George the Fourth, imagine that their conversations with the sporting Clerk of the Council were to become materials for history.

The editor of these volumes states that Mr. Greville was remarkable for his love of truth. Some of the "blackguards and fools of the Turf" may, perhaps, except to this statement. Be that as it may, we are convinced that the terrible and ludicrous scenes described in these volumes could not have been *imagined* by any mind. We believe these 'Memoirs,' like the similar 'Memoirs of Lord Hervey,' convey an accurate account of the interior of a court. Many never will believe that anything is true which is written against the great. A very shrewd man was of a different opinion. A *parvenu* once talked to the old Duke of Queensberry about the libels published against the court and aristocracy. "They are infamous!" said the *parvenu.* "Shocking!" said the duke. "So false!" said the *parvenu.* "Oh, not false!" said the duke. "I should not care about them if they were false. They are all so confoundedly true!"

One of the reviewers attributes the malignant attacks on the character of George the Fourth to an illness after a Jockey Club dinner:—

"*June 29th.*—I sat opposite to him (the king), and he was particularly gracious to me, talking to me across the table, and recommending me all the good things; he made me (after eating a quantity of turtle) eat a dish of crawfish soup till I thought I should have burst."

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Certainly, Mr. Greville never forgot or forgave anybody who gave him an indigestion; and when the English Opera House was burnt down, Mr. Greville remarks:—

"I trust the paraphernalia of the Beefsteak Club perished with the rest, for the enmity I bear that society for the dinner they gave me last year."

With respect to the character of George the Fourth, nothing certainly can exceed the virulence of Mr. Greville against his gracious master, who seems to have been invariably kind to him. And yet there was a decided coincidence of character on some points. Mr. Greville says, "The king is the greatest master of gossip in the world, and his curiosity about everybody's affairs is insatiable."

With respect to gossip and curiosity, we certainly think that the king and his clerk were in the same line of business.

Mr. Greville's account of the relations between the king and his favourite, Sir William Knighton, are most remarkable. We strongly recommend our readers to procure the 'Memoirs of Sir William Knighton,' in which quite a seraphic history of the intercourse between the king and his doctor is given, and then to contrast it with the following account which Mr. Greville received from Lady Conyngham's son, Lord Mount Charles:—

"Knighton, whom the king abhors with a detestation that could hardly be described. He is afraid of him, and that is the reason. When alone with him, he is more civil, but when others are present, the family for instance, he delights in saying the most mortifying and disagreeable things to him. He says that his language about Knighton is sometimes of the most unmeasured violence, wishes he was dead, and one day, when the door was open so that the pages could hear, he said, 'I wish to God somebody would assassinate Knighton.' Knighton is greatly *annoyed* at it."

Annoyed! A king roaring out for the destruction of his tyrannical physician, and the unfortunate doctor merely *annoyed!* It reminds us of the story of the gentleman who had a large amount of foreign bonds in Sir John Paul's bank. When the crisis came, the anxious depositor went after his treasure, and was ushered into the presence of Mr. Bates, the junior partner. "Where are my bonds?" said he. "They are gone," said Mr. Bates. The depositor expressed himself strongly on this point. Upon which Mr. Bates said, "I am very sorry; but I assure you, when Sir John took your bonds out of the chest to sell them, I told him that when you heard of it, you would be very much *annoyed.*"

Luckily, the pages, although they must have talked over the matter, did not imitate the conduct of the faithful knights who quickly got rid—much to his *annoyance*—of Thomas à Becket.

"The king's indolence is so great that it is next to impossible to get him to do the most ordinary business, and Knighton is still the only man

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who can prevail on him to sign papers, &c. His great delight is to make those who have business to transact with him wait in the ante-room while he is lounging with Mount Charles or anybody, talking of horses or any trivial matter, and when he is told, 'Sir, there is Watson waiting,' he replies, 'Damn Watson; let him wait.' He does it on purpose, and likes it."

Then Mr. Greville, having pumped his well dry, begins:—

"This account corresponds with all I have heard, and confirms the opinion I have long had, that a more contemptible, cowardly, selfish, unfeeling dog does not exist than this king, *on whom such flattery is constantly lavished.* He has a sort of capricious good-nature, arising out of no good principle or feeling, but which is of use to him, as it cancels, in a moment and at small cost, a long score of misconduct. Princes have only to behave with common decency and prudence, and they are sure to be popular, for there is a great and general disposition to pay court to them. I do not know anybody who is proof against their seductions when they think fit to use them in the shape of civility and condescension."

Of course this is all very sad, yet the Clerk of the Council has a great consolation, and a very remarkable consolation it is:—

"The *great consolation* in all this is the proof that, so far from deriving happiness from their grandeur, they are the most miserable of mankind."

Here is another extract:—

"The king leads a most extraordinary life; never gets up till six in the afternoon. They come to him and open the window curtains at six or seven o'clock in the morning; he breakfasts in bed, does whatever business he can be brought to transact in bed, too; he reads every newspaper quite through, dozes three or four hours, gets up in time for dinner, and goes to bed between ten and eleven. He sleeps very ill, and rings the bell *forty* times in the night if he wants to know the hour; though a watch hangs close to him, he will have his *valet de chambre* down rather than turn his head to look at it. The same thing if he wants a glass of water; he won't stretch out his hand to get it."

Mr. Charles Greville was absent from England at the death of this "most miserable of mankind;" but on his returning to England, he had "the great consolation" of hearing all the details of the king's last moments:—

"I called on Batchelor. I was there a couple of hours, and heard all the *details* of the late king's illness and other things."

Mr. Greville had a passion for details. He was as curious about them as the old Frenchwoman, who, when her friend only told her that he had taken a dose of physic, still demanded, "*Mais les détails!*" After the king's death, we are informed—

"There never was anything like the quantity of trinkets and trash they found. He had never given away or parted with anything. There was a prodigious quantity of hair—*women's hair*—of all colours and lengths, some

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locks with powder and pomatum still sticking to them, heaps of women's gloves, *gages d'amour*, which he had got at balls, and with the perspiration still marked on the fingers, notes and letters in abundance."

How Thackeray would have moralised over this!

With regard to the intercourse between the king and Lady Conyngham, both Mr. Greville and his editor have no doubt that she was the mistress of the king; but Mr. Greville tells us that his father once asked Talleyrand whether M. de Marbœuf was not *un peu l'amant* of Madame Pernon, mother of the Duchess D'Abrantés. The answer was, "*Oui, mais je ne sais pas dans quelles proportions.*" So all we know is, that the king was *un peu l'amant;* but we do not know, *dans quelles proportions.* The editor, becoming lively on the subject of kings' mistresses, explains the "*quelles proportions*" of Louis the Eighteenth's devotion for Madame Du Cayla:—

"The king was touched by her grace and beauty, and she became indispensable to his happiness. His happiness was said to consist in inhaling a pinch of snuff from her shoulders, which were remarkably broad and fair."

After reading this frisky note, we cannot help hoping that Mr. Reeve will give us some day a new edition of 'Grammont.'

William the Fourth now appears upon the scene, and Mr. Greville's pen is soon very busy about him:—

"Never was elevation like that of King William the Fourth. His life had hitherto passed in obscurity and neglect, in miserable poverty, surrounded by a numerous progeny of bastards, without consideration or friends, and he was ridiculous by his grotesque ways and little meddling curiosity."

Mr. Greville, like the Duc de St. Simon, always talks of the illegitimate descendants of royalty as "the bastards;" not very good taste in a man who had peculiar reasons to be interested in that accidental class of the community. The account of William the Fourth's conduct is certainly grotesque, and more resembles that of a king in a pantomime than a monarch of history.

At the funeral of the late king, he rushed out of the procession to shake hands with Lord Strathaven, and then went on, nodding to the right and left. A few days afterwards, he was mobbed when "trotting up" St. James's Street, and was rescued with difficulty, after being kissed by an old woman. Then he runs off to Woolwich, to inspect the artillery, gives a dinner, with toasts, and hip-hurrahing, and three times three, himself giving the time.

"I tremble for him," writes Mr. Greville; "at present he is only a mountebank, but he bids fair to be a maniac. The other night, the king had a party, and at eleven o'clock he dismissed them thus: 'Now, ladies and gentlemen, I wish you a good night. I will not detain you from your

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amusements, and shall go to my own, which is to go to bed; so come along, my queen."

Just such a speech does the king in a modern burlesque make when, after dancing the *cancan* with the queen and courtiers, he hurries off to the nuptial bower.

"The talk of the town has been about the king and a toast he gave at a great dinner at St. James's the other day. He had ninety guests, all his ministers, all the great people, and all the foreign ambassadors. After dinner, he made a long, rambling speech in French, and ended by giving as 'a sentiment,' as he called it, 'The land we live in.' This was before the ladies left the room. After they were gone, he made another speech in French, in the course of which he travelled over every variety of topic that suggested itself to his excursive mind, and ended with a very coarse toast and the words, '*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*' Sefton, who told it me, said he never felt so ashamed. Lord Grey was ready to sink into the earth; *everybody laughed, of course,* and Sefton, who sat next to Talleyrand, said to him, '*Eh bien! que pensez vous de cela?*' With his unmoved, unmovable face he answered only, '*C'est bien remarquable.*'"

Mr. Greville does not seem to have received any information from the king's valets, but he obtains a minute account of his personal habits from one of the "bastards":—

"Riding to the course on Wednesday, I overtook Adolphus FitzClarence, who rode with me and gave me an account of his father's habits and present state of mind. The former are as follows:—He sleeps in the same room as the queen, but in a separate bed. At a quarter before eight every morning, his *valet de chambre* knocks at the door, and, at ten minutes before eight exactly, he gets out of bed, puts on a flannel dressing-gown and trousers, and walks into his dressing-room. Let who will be there, he never takes the slightest notice of them till he emerges from this sanctuary, when, like a *malade imaginaire,* he accosts whoever may be present with a cheerful aspect. He is long at his ablutions, and takes up an hour and a half in dressing. At half-past nine, he breakfasts with the queen, the ladies, and any of his family; he eats a couple of fingers and drinks a dish of coffee. After breakfast, he reads the *Times* and *Morning Post,* commenting aloud on what he reads in very plain terms, and sometimes they hear, 'That's a damned lie!' or some such remark, without knowing to what it applies. After breakfast, he devotes himself to business with Sir Herbert Taylor, when he lunches (two cutlets and two glasses of sherry); then he goes out for a drive till dinner-time; at dinner, he drinks a bottle of sherry —no other wine—eats moderately, and goes to bed soon after eleven. He is in dreadfully low spirits, and cannot rally at all."

The poor king never seems to have recovered his spirits after the resignation of Sir Robert Peel. He had been defeated in his attempt to get rid of the Whigs, and he did not live to witness the Conservative victory of 1841.

"When Adolphus told him that a dinner ought to be given for Ascot Races, he said, 'You know I cannot give a dinner without inviting the ministers, and I would rather see the devil than any one of them in my house.'"

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We might fill this number with amusing extracts, but we must conclude, only observing that we cannot help thinking, although we bow to his superior information, that Mr. Greville has been somewhat harsh in his judgment of the character of William the Fourth. He may have been a foolish man, but we believe he was kind, charitable, well-meaning, and that he was heart and soul devoted to the interests of England. Mr. Greville, not content with calling him an ass and a buffoon, stigmatises him as a blackguard. We think the judicious editor might have expunged this word from the indictment. We do not, even in Mr. Greville's book, find one syllable in support of such a charge.

The king died on the 21st of June, 1837, surrounded by his family. He had wished to live over the 18th of June. He said, "This is the 18th of June; I should like to live to see the sun of Waterloo set!" How different from the last days of George the Fourth!

But the royal personage most cordially detested by Mr. Greville is Queen Adelaide, whom he seldom mentions without a bitter sneer at her plainness. The poor queen could not help her complexion. Fortunately, her character was far above any imputation, although Mr. Greville gives some curious *details* about Lord Howe.

"It is impossible to ascertain the exact nature of this connection. Howe conducts himself towards her like an ardent lover; he is never out of the pavilion, dines there almost every day, or goes every evening, rides with her, never quitting her side, and never taking his eyes off her. She does nothing; but she admits his attention, and acquiesces in his devotion. At the same time, there is not the smallest evidence that she treats him as a lover. If she did, it would soon be known, for she is surrounded by enemies."

When Lord Howe was obliged to resign the Chamberlainship on account of his Tory opinions, Mr. Greville strenuously advised him to prevail on the queen to appoint another official.

"Lady Howe, who is vexed to death at the whole thing, was enchanted at my advice, and vehemently urged him to adopt it. After he went away, she told me how glad she was at what I said, and asked me if people did not say everything about Howe's connection with the queen, which I told her they did. I must say what passed is enough to satisfy me that there is what is called 'nothing in it but the folly and vanity of being the confidential officer and adviser of this hideous queen, for whom he has worked himself up into a sort of chivalrous devotion.'"

Again, when the queen was supposed to be with child, Mr. Greville observes:—

"Of course there will be plenty of scandal. Alvanley proposes that the Psalm 'Lord, *how* wonderful are thy works!' should be sung. 'It so happens, however, that Howe has not been to court for a considerable time.'"

We have finished our brief notice of these wonderful volumes, and we must be grateful to the "Registrar of the Council," for his

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marvellous boldness in publishing the most interesting details of palace life the present generation has been presented with. Mr. Stapleton lifts up his voice against the publication; and we are convinced if Sir George Lewis had edited the book, he would have Bowdlerised it.

Mr. Stapleton also has one great consolation, memoirs like these are not likely to be repeated; and if on the resignation of Sir Arthur Helps, Mr. Martin Tupper should be appointed to the post of Clerk of the Council, we are convinced no bad consequences would ensue.

It is only an aristocrat like Mr. Greville who could perform the stern task of analysing royal society. It is true he is inexorable. He treats his royal victims very like the "Punch"* of the streets, who keeps bringing up his friends on the stage in order that he may have the pleasure of torturing and then knocking them down again. So in the journals, the victims come rising up at intervals to receive some knocks, till at last they are cruelly despatched.

There are wretched people running about London prophesying that the remaining volumes are to be cremated in the presence of a Lord-in-Waiting. We cannot believe that Mr. Reeve will act so unkindly to his friends and a greedy British public, who, like Oliver Twist, are asking for "more." The only other person who has read them besides Mr. Reeve is, we understand, Mr. Greville's *valet de chambre*. We think these two gentlemen will be the lions of the coming season.

* Mr. Greville was sometimes called "Punch" Greville, on account of a supposed likeness to that remorseless tyrant. He was also known among his intimates by the name of the "Gruncher." Some correspondents of 'Notes and Queries' will perhaps give us the full meaning of this word. We believe it has something to do with "growling." Mr. Reeve is in error in making O'Connell the author of "Paul, Paul." It was a Mr. Kearsley, Member for Wigan, who was very noisy one night. Mr. Paul Methuen rose with great pomposity to stop his proceedings. When Mr. Kearsley shouted out, "The Honourable Member for Wiltshire, rising so intemperately to order, tempts me to exclaim, 'Paul, Paul, why persecuteth thou me?'" Never was there such a scene of uproarious merriment as at this retort.

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Kadour the Turco.

A TALE OF THE COMMUNE.

Kadour was a kettle-drummer in one of the native Algerian regiments of Imperial France. Like all his fellows, this sturdy little man of the tribe of Djendel, drawn from the burning coast of Barbary to serve the ambition of Napoleon the Third, played his part manfully with the flower of the French troops, from the opening disasters of Weissenberg and Wörth down to the Imperial catastrophe at Sedan. Then Kadour had the ingenuity so to pick his way as to overtake the rearmost files of the corps of General Vinoy, who was skilfully retreating on Paris, and to arrive with a handful of his comrades, as the last reinforcement from without, which the gay capital was to receive before it was enclosed in the iron embrace of the advancing Germans. On the glorious though unsuccessful days of the great sortie to Champigny, in November, Kadour flew about with his *derbouka*, or little Arab drum, in the thick of the fight, as usual, like a stormy petrel—the balls seemed always whistling round the nimble Turco, only to escape him by the merest chance. He came back safe and merry as ever. But the dreary winter told on the little bronzed Algerian, although the fiercest *mitraille* never discomposed him; he was unable to support the long nights on guard—the standing for hours and hours together in the thick snow; and one morning in January he was picked up among the outposts on the Marne with his feet completely frozen. There was no remedy for poor Kadour but a long residence in the hospital.

There it was that I first made his acquaintance; he lay on his bed, sad but patient, just like a sick dog, his bright eyes looking affectionately round about him. When you spoke to him he smiled and showed his teeth, which was all that he could do, as the French language was unknown to him, and he scarcely even knew the *Sabir*, that *lingua Franca*, composed of Provençal, Italian, and Arabic, mixed very indiscriminately together, like the shell-work of the Mediterranean coasts.

To amuse him, therefore, there was only his *derbouka*, and now and then, when the poor fellow seemed quite wearied out, it was brought to his bed, and he was permitted to play on it for a time, but not too loudly, on account of the other invalids. Then his brown face, grave and melancholy before, would light up, his eyes sparkled, and you could see by the varying expressions of his features the asso-

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ciations awakened in his mind by the sound of his beloved instrument. He would beat the charge, and his white teeth would gleam out as he broke into a laugh of defiance or victory, or a melancholy remembrance would steal over his face, and the tears would come to his eyes, as he played some Moorish serenade.

Two months elapsed before Kadour's legs were completely cured. During those two months, Paris had suffered many and strange experiences; but Kadour knew not of them; all that he had been able to note had been the troops constantly passing and repassing, and cannon also on some days, dragged by for hours together. From all this he could, in his ignorance of French, naturally arrive at but two definite conclusions: that the war was going on as much as ever, and that he was at length able to march, his legs being cured; both which facts rejoiced him exceedingly.

Behold him, then, with much delight, slinging on his *derbouka* and quitting the hospital in search of his company. He did not continue his search long; for certain great events, just then astonishing the whole world, happened to exercise a remarkable and decisive influence on the destiny of our Turco.

The Commune had just commenced its brief and monstrous tragicomedy. As Kadour stepped along the streets a body of Fédérés, who were marching by, stopped him and conducted him to headquarters. After a long interrogatory, the "General" of the day, finding that nothing could be extracted from the Turco but simply and continually "*Bono bezef—macache bono,*" finished by bestowing on him ten francs and a horse that had belonged to an omnibus company, and attached him to his staff.

The *états-majors* of the Commune were invariably composed of the strangest mixtures: red tunics, often half worn out, Polish cloaks, Hungarian braided garments, naval pilot coats; and almost all overlaid as much as possible with velvet, gold lace, spangles, and gewgaws: such were some of the various costumes affected by the martial *citoyens* of the Red Republic. With his blue gold-laced garb, his turban, and his *derbouka*, the Turco made no unfitting addition to this masquerade. He was quite elated to find himself in such fine company, and his head was almost turned, what with the warm sun (so refreshing to him), the perpetual cannonading, the wild and gorgeous variety of arms and uniforms, and the ceaseless hubbub of the streets. Persuaded that all he saw was simply the continuation of the war with Prussia, only with an indescribable addition of piquancy and liberty of action, he mixed innocently and gravely with the grand Parisian delirium, and became quite the lion of the moment. Everywhere he was received with welcome and applause by the supporters of the Commune, who looked on his presence as a sign of those fresh accessions to their ranks from the regular army which

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they so much desired. The Communists were so proud of their acquisition, that he was shown and paraded about as a kind of trophy; it had been so often said that their *soi-disant* sailors and marines were *sham* sailors and marines, their artillerymen *sham* artillerymen; but here at least was a veritable Turco. No one need look twice upon the brave little man moving fiercely and restlessly on his big horse, and doubt that.

The happiness of Kadour was not long without alloy. *His* ardent desire was to see sharp fighting and firing at close quarters. Unfortunately for him, it was under the Commune as under the Empire: the *état-major* was not often under fire; his time, therefore, was chiefly passed either at the headquarters in the Place Vendôme or in the courts of the Ministry of War.

One morning at the end of May, however, the Turco was aroused by the noise of a terrible fusillade. Around him, at the Ministry of War, all was confusion. Everyone was hastening out. Mechanically he imitated the example of those round him, jumped on his horse, and accompanied the *état-major*.

The streets were filled with Communist bands in various conditions of disarray; bugles were wildly sounding from time to time, flagstones were being pulled up, barricades were being strengthened, and fresh ones commenced; everything showed that some extraordinary crisis was at hand. Nearer to the quays the tumult grew wilder, the firing more distinct; at the Pont de la Concorde Kadour was separated from his companions. A little farther on he was obliged to dismount and give up his horse—it was wanted by a gorgeously-dressed officer, very much in a hurry, who for private reasons of his own, wished *to see what was passing at the Hôtel de Ville.*

Irritated, but resolved on his part to *get to the fighting*, Kadour loaded his chassepot and rushed onwards on foot, muttering between his teeth as he ran, "*Macach bono! Brissien!*" for he, poor fellow, never doubted but that the Prussians were now attacking, and that he, true to his duty, was about to face them. Already the balls were whistling about the obelisk of Luxor. At the great barricade of the Rue de Rivoli, some "Vengeurs de Flourens" (one of the most desperate of the Communist bands) hailed him: "*Hé! Turco—Turco!*" They only numbered about a dozen, but Kadour—brave little Kadour—felt an army in himself. Up he mounted, and began firing away with them, feeling at last in his right position. When the smoke between the barricade and the advancing army cleared off a little in the interval of the cannonades, it puzzled the Turco to see before him masses of the *pantalons rouges* coming on from the Champs Élysées. Kadour thought his eyes must have deceived him, and loaded and fired as before, with all the energy of a Turco and a soldier of France.

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All at once, behind the barricade was silence. Firing one parting volley, every one of the Communists had made off. Kadour budged not, but, getting a little more under cover, he fixed his bayonet solidly, and made ready to spring, as he had sprung times before, on "the spiked helmets." It was the *French line* which arrived! and above the quick tread of the men the voice of an officer shouted "*Rendez-vous!*"

The Turco felt a species of stupefaction; then an idea flashed across his mind, and he advanced joyously, holding up the butt end of his gun, and crying "*Bono, bono, Francese!*" Vaguely the poor savage's mind had reached the conclusion that these men before him, whom he saw so plainly to be French, were indeed the advanced guard of that army of deliverance, led by Faidherbe or Chanzy, which, months back, during the siege, he had dimly gathered was one day to arrive! How happy he was then for a moment! He grinned and showed his white teeth in ecstasy—but it was for a moment only. A hand was laid sharply on his shoulder—the hand of a French officer, who looked with exceeding grimness on poor Kadour. "Show your gun!" It was still warm. "Your hands!" They were black with powder (and the innocent Turco exhibited them quite proudly, still smiling merrily at his captors). In an instant he was pushed up against the nearest wall, and then—"Rran!—Rran!"

Poor Kadour! He died without in the least knowing why, wherefore, or anything at all about the momentous changes which had thus brought upon him the hard fate of an unconscious deserter!

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Patricia Kemball.

Chapter XXXVII.

HAMLEY, M.P.

The whole country was in a fever of excitement. A fête was to be given at the Quest, surpassing in magnificence anything that had ever been done before even in that lordly domain; and the world of Milltown stood still to watch the proceedings. All the visitable people of the locality were of course invited, and there was to be a large gathering of notabilities from London as well as of magnates from county places. A popular novelist who went into society for his raw material, and looked on a dinner as copy and a ball as a dozen pages written to his hand and only needing to be transcribed; a handsome young poet of high renown, who made love to married women and celebrated them afterwards in verse; a sprinkling of able editors, modern Joves whose thunderbolts tell, and whom the great ones of the earth are fain to court as the kings of the fourth estate; and a couple of distinguished artists who lived like princes and with them—represented the aristocracy of talent, beside whose glories, in the minds of some, stars grow dim and garters and ribbons are of no more value than so many yards of coloured tape. But indeed all sorts and conditions of men were represented at this fête; and even the industrial had his envoy in the person of a rich cotton-spinner who had bought for a hundred pounds his foreman's invention for the better winding of thread, and who, by saving fractions of farthings on the reels, had rolled up millions of pounds as the gross results.

But among all these favoured guests bidden to see the show and swell the court of the local royalties, one house was passed over; and the Hamleys of Abbey Holme were not invited.

It was an impolitic omission; and no one knew exactly how it came to pass. When things turned ill in consequence the Countess threw the blame on the house-steward; not ashamed, proud woman though she was, to make her subordinate suffer for her own deed. On his side the steward swore that her ladyship had run her pen through the name when she went over the list; and that he was bound to obey a sign as much as a word.

"A signal's an order," he said; and his hearers agreed with him that it was.

As no commission of inquiry was appointed, and the private visiting-list of the Quest was not submitted to official inspection, the

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thing passed as an inadvertance, regrettable but by no means to be apologised for, even when the consequences became evident a week or so later, and the mistake in policy fructified so disastrously.

By whose fault however it might have been that it came to pass, my lady's or the steward's, the fact was undeniable; the Hamleys were not invited to the fête, and the whole country knew of the slight. It was delightful to Colonel Lowe. It rejoiced his spirits like his morning cordial brewed of double strength, and stood for so much percentage off that terrible mortgage money which had to be paid, else Cragfoot must pass from his hands like a dissolving view. It reconciled him for a moment to his hard fate in being obliged to do without the cakes he had already eaten, and to pay for the pipers to whom he had danced. It was a day worth living for, he said to his son, to see that old shoe-black slapped in the face as he deserved, and he hoped he should live to see him slapped on the other cheek before he had done with him.

"I should like to see him a beggar at my door," he said; "and I would not give him a crust to keep him from starving."

To which Sydney answered in the manner of a rebuke: "There is no good in wishing impossibilities; but cannot some one put a bullet through his head?"

"Easily, my boy, if no hemp was handy," laughed the colonel unpleasantly.

"By Jove! the old Italian society knew what it was about; and a hired bravo is a useful kind of scavenger after all," said Sydney.

"He cleared off the vermin," answered his father, "when all other means had failed," significantly; and Sydney's thoughts went back from James Garth, whom in his heart he cursed for cowardice, to Julia Manley, to whom that day at the fête he had determined to propose. There was no help for it. It was bigamy sure enough, or would be, and bigamy was a felony; but murder would have even more unpleasant consequences, and between the two he took credit to himself for choosing the minor crime. He had not chosen without long deliberation, many qualms, and a few angry tears; but he had chosen now, and so must make the best of it and go through to the end.

This slight stung the Hamleys deeply. It was too evident to be concealed, and no varnish could gloss it over. It hurt the master of Abbey Holme in his most sensitive part—his recognised social position; and even when he went about explaining to every one that the reason of it was—his wife's niece had refused the offer of Lord Merrian's hand—he did himself no good and mended matters not a whit. For the mischief of it was no one believed him, and a few said the Quest people should really take it up and prosecute him for libel. It was impossible that a girl in her senses, and without prospects to be called

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prospects, should have refused the heir to an earldom; and just as impossible that she should have had the chance. Lord Merrian might have trifled with her; they saw nothing to condemn in that, for was not he a viscount and Patricia Kemball a comparative nobody? and her vanity might have taken as serious attentions which he meant as just so much amusement; but he never made her an offer, they said with an incredulous intonation. It was not in the nature of things, and some one told untruths. It was just one of that conceited fellow's brags, said Colonel Lowe; or the girl's own falsehood which had imposed on him.

Thus, though Mr. Hamley talked of it everywhere, Patricia's lofty action gave them but a very barren kind of honour at the best. To be able to boast of a brilliant offer of marriage refused by a wrong-headed young person—his wife's niece, who had absurd ideas about loyalty—when half the world doubted the statement, was a poor exchange for the actual recognition of an invitation; and so the master of Abbey Holme felt. He was not a business man, accustomed to weigh the comparative values of investments, for nothing; and he understood as well as most the worth of a fact over that of a word. The word melted into air, but the fact stood like granite.

Mr. Hamley was scarcely a Christian of the kind to receive an affront and forbear to pay it back. On the contrary, he upheld the doctrine of an eye for an eye as the soundest ever preached, and boasted that he had always given tit for tat in his life—a method of proceeding quite in harmony with the fluent good nature of the man when not ruffled nor thwarted. He was in nowise minded now that "the Dovedales" should escape their tit; they had to have it, he said, and he meant to give it them, hot and strong. If he could not make them serviceable friends he would be their formidable foe; and as they declined to give him a hand up the ladder, he would teach them what it was to have a saw rasping their own rungs. They wanted Lord Merrian to represent the borough, did they? and my lady had canvassed him when she thought he would be of use, had she? She seemed to have forgotten that now, but he had not; and when the next election came, as it would, a fortnight hence, they would find the course my young lord was to walk over pretty hotly contested, and in all probability the peer would lose what the parvenu would win. He had the most money to jingle in the ears of the free and enlightened; and, ballot or no ballot, local influence tells, and votes are marketable all the same as before.

So Mr. Hamley set to work at once on the plan of his campaign; and soon all Milltown was on fire again, with the news this time that Ledbury's successful office-boy was going to contest the borough with Lord Merrian; and every one said he would win. He had large local influence, and he represented the self-made. Though a "swell" now

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of appalling magnitude, had he not known hunger in his day, and been ragged and barefooted? The working-classes held a kind of vested right in him in their own minds, and regarded him as a flower from their root, a crystal from their clay. And beside these, there were the people who disbelieve in youth and prefer maturity, without any reference to the intrinsic qualities of either—people who would rather trust the bag to a bearded Judas than to a boy saint with a woman's face, and to whom Mr. Hamley, as a man having experience, was to be infinitely preferred to a raw lad who had not even a wife to help him.

The game was by no means desperate; indeed it looked marvellously hopeful; and the countess repented herself afresh that she had listened to pique rather than prudence, and been more instinctive than politic.

"Spite never pays," she thought ruefully; "it would have been better if I had asked them, and kept that monster in good humour."

With all this encouragement the monster had fierce opponents as well; none fiercer than Colonel Lowe, who made the vote a personal matter, and resented it as an insult offered to himself if yellow was worn and not blue; and none more influential in his quiet way than Dr. Fletcher. Between an impressionable young soul full of fluid convictions, and a cast-iron mind welded through and through into wrong ones, he thought there was more chance of good from the former. Lord Merrian would probably drift into the wrong lobby on some divisions, but then he would go into the right one on others; but Mr. Hamley would be invariably wrong. If the one had everything to learn, and most of all a central idea round which his theories of life might crystallize, the chances were even between learning good and evil; but what was to be hoped from a man who had adopted finality, and perfected his views on every point, yet who had spelt all his lessons backward and learnt nothing of life but the religion of success? Wherefore, though the bustle and insincerity of an election time were not much in Henry Fletcher's way, he consented to be one of Lord Merrian's committee, not because he affected him warmly, but because he wished to keep out the other. And this more than ever widened the breach between the Hollies and Abbey Holme, and gave increased tangibility to Mr. Hamley's wrath.

The campaign, though short, was sharp.

Mr. Hamley stood on the high Tory interest. He despised as trumpery palterings with great questions all the boneless liberal-conservatism of young England, he said when he addressed the free and enlightened on his nomination, and was required to give the text of his convictions. To blow hot and cold was not his motto, and whatever he was he was Thorough. The altar and the throne; our glorious institutions and our national flag; England the home of the

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free, and the knavish tricks of socialists and reds confounded by the high good sense of the people—that was his platform—let those find a better who could! The people's heart was good, their judgment was sound. They knew where their best interests were to be found—in the union of all classes, not in class division. They would vote then, for the man who understood them best, who had been one of them, and whose success was as much an honour to them as to himself. They would vote for him rather than for the young gentleman who had no definite policy to offer them; who knew nothing of the great questions he was setting himself forward to decide; and who would be simply so much material for clever whips and unscrupulous ministers. To elect that young gentleman would be to confide their interests into the keeping of hands that could not hold them, to steer by a weathercock that veered with every breath. As for the third candidate, who had been sent down at the last moment as a feeler by the republicans, he, Mr. Hamley, being a law-abiding man, did *not* recommend the horse-pond, but he supposed the men of Milltown would have more self-respect than to choose for their representative a friend of petroleum and the Communists; a wretch who would deluge the fair face of England with blood, and who would leave neither religion nor morality nor yet property standing.

His speeches and addresses, which were written for him, were effective; his showy presence also had its own value; his ready tongue, his definite views, all as positive and final as the multiplication table, pleased many; his money did more; and his uncompromising Toryism did most of all. Milltown was conservative to the backbone; and though Lord Merrian carried many of the gentry and the more independent thinkers with him, his admixture of philosophic liberalism gave Mr. Hamley just the advantage which won the day. The radical candidate, of course, was nowhere. He had been sent down merely as a gauge, and his exit from the town was ignominious.

Thus the game was lost and won in spite of Colonel Lowe and Henry Fletcher; and Mr. Hamley's name came out at the head of the poll, beating my lord by some scores.

It was a proud day for him. Jabez Hamley, M.P. It was a glorious rubber in the game of bowls that had begun between him and the Quest since that memorable day of omission! Jabez Hamley, M.P., and my young lord, with the influence of his name, his earldom in the distance, and the flag flying from the Quest like royalty itself at home, defeated. Who says that the working-man has not the power of station and riches in his hand if he chooses! Good sense, energy, and will—and here you see him, the richest landed proprietor of Milltown, and M.P. for the borough!

The man's self-congratulations were inexhaustible, and even his closest adherents were weary of them. He was as if possessed by a

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peripatetic demon of pride and elation, and neither street nor road was free from him. Wherever you went you met Mr. Hamley, florid, condescending, self-satisfied; his head held high and his shoulders set square; his radiant humour shining out all over him like a sun; inexhaustible in talk of the election, and what he did, and how he had beaten my lord by pluck and energy and right views; and how splendidly his fellows had fought for him, and how ill my lord had managed everything—yes, even with my lady the countess, and the young person he was to marry, with their fair speeches and more tangible bribes. But pluck and energy—"Oh! that eternal pluck and energy!" said Mr. Borrodaile sarcastically, after he had listened with smiling politeness to a full hour's declamation on the Hamley qualities as interpreted by the Hamley intellect.

Hamley, M.P.

He wrote the name as many times as a love-sick school-girl writes her lover's and her own. He spent all his quiet time in devising a proper flourish, one that would replace the ordinary scroll he had elaborated up to this time, and that should be like an ornamental fence-work about the cherished initials. He gave Dora a new bracelet on the occasion, with "From Hamley, M.P.," engraved in bossed and fanciful letters that looked like flowers about his photograph, which formed the centre ornament; and he bought his wife a diamond ring, which he presented to her with a set speech that pleased the poor lady whom long habit had rendered less critical than of old. It was a speech in the worst possible taste, and would have set her teeth on edge in former days; but now she smiled in her frosty way, and said, "Thanks, Mr. Hamley, you are very kind, and I like this token of your success." And she was, as she said, really gratified by his gift.

Thus the Hamley sun shone bright and warm, and there was not a shadow anywhere, save one—Patricia Kemball, and the breach existing between her and them.

As for the "cut with the Dovedales," as Mr. Hamley phrased it, he regarded that now as a providential ordering—providence being on his side. Had they asked him to the fête he would have still been their humble servant, and would have worked for Lord Merrian for the wages of their social patronage; but having cast him off they had made a free man of him, and an M.P. to follow. No, there was not a shadow anywhere; and even Patricia Kemball was but as a mote in the sunbeam, really of no importance. When Mrs. Hamley dropped, her niece would be wiped off the slate as though she had never been. He had no kind of ill-feeling to her; quite the contrary; but she had been a mistake, and Mr. Hamley was too keen a man of business to cherish mistakes. Things that begin with bother end with loss, he always said; and Patricia Kemball was no exception

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to the rule. Wherefore he looked to her aunt's decease as the sponge over the slate where her name stood; when he would have no more to do with her. What else might remain rested in his own mind only.

Chapter XXXVIII.

WHAT MILLTOWN SAID.

If Mr. Hamley could afford to be philosophic and magnanimous about that "uncomfortable young person," as he called Patricia, society was less patient. After the excitement too of the fête and the election, and the odd rumours that were afloat concerning many things and people, Milltown wanted something special in which to interest itself, as a kind of aftermath of gossip. So it fastened on the extraordinary state of things existing between the Hollies and Abbey Holme, and made it a personal matter as to which was right and which was wrong; the two sides quarrelling fiercely together. The fact was, people could not make it out, and were angry in consequence. Why had she so suddenly left her aunt's house, they said, speaking of Patricia, and taken up her abode with an unmarried man of no nearer kinship than Adam? Some said it was infamous in Mrs. Hamley to allow it, and others said it was shameless in the young lady to do it. To be sure, Henry Fletcher was an old fogey, and there was a sister to stand sponsor for the girl to Mrs. Grundy; but it was a very odd position all the same. And when people talk about an odd position they mean something wrong in the background. If it is a woman who is athwart the lines, her false perspective is sure to be accounted to her as a sin; and no one could persuade the Abbey Holmeites that Patricia was not a good-for-nothing young baggage who had done something abominable, for which she had been justly turned out of doors. But what a wicked thing of those Fletchers to take her in and countenance her as they did! It was just like them! Look at the servants they had—that Mary Anne, quite an improper girl; and Alice Garth, who had been dismissed from Abbey Holme at a moment's notice; and now Miss Kemball! It seemed as if a woman need only go wrong and be disgraceful to ensure their patronage and friendship; and it was really shameful.

So the Abbey Holmeites stormed, and the partisans of the Hollies, being few and feeble, were for the most part discomfited, having only vague charity to go upon for their defence. And this never does much good in a local slander.

Mr. Wells too, had been a little incautious, and had hinted at some things and told others. He was as much in the dark as everybody else as to the truth of that forgery, and he did not believe that the young lady had done it herself. But he had no clue to her accomplice; and at all events it was too strange a secret to keep

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entirely to himself. People are for the most part generous with strange secrets, and like to share their wealth with their neighbours; and Mr. Wells was no exception to the rule, though he was a good, inoffensive soul, who picked up caterpillars and small frogs from the dusty roads and put them into the moist banks, when taking his evening rambles, and was otherwise meek and benevolent. Still, he told more than he should about that hundred-pound cheque, and he hinted more than he told. Whence it came to pass that Patricia's name got more and more into the public mouth, and that people were beginning to regard her as a scandal to the place. A society so eminently respectable as that of Milltown does not like its young ladies to be talked of. Ever on the look-out for causes of offence, and ever in the mood to imagine what it does not find, it punishes the victims it creates. As it had chosen Patricia for its present victim, it assumed that she must have been guilty of something bad because she was being talked about. It is a circular kind of logic common to narrow communities; and the Milltown community was very narrow.

At last some one took heart and spoke to Miss Fletcher seriously, warning her against her guest, affectionately, as is the way with people when they have put on their armour of righteousness and mean mischief. It was the rector's wife, Mrs. Borrodaile—chosen spokeswoman by the rest on account of her official position, which gave a reflected sanctity to her warnings—who came one day to the Hollies and begged to see Miss Fletcher alone. She hoped she did not offend in her zeal, she said; but was she quite satisfied with her young friend?—quite sure that she was all she seemed to be, and as simple and good as she had once represented her? Strange reports were going about the town concerning her. There was some disgraceful mystery connected with the Bank and a cheque, of which she, Mrs. Borrodaile, had not full particulars; but it was something very dreadful, and she knew quite enough to make her uneasy. She was a very odd young person too, she had heard, in opinion; and was quite a freethinker, and all that; with queer notions about morality, and the most objectionable habits—a very unsatisfactory young person indeed, and one to beware of.

So the good lady sat and talked, and stabbed a young creature's fair fame with the best intentions in the world; thinking she was performing the part of a Christian minister's wife as it should be performed, and feeling satisfied that her matronly purity and propriety were justly incensed against youthful iniquity.

Catherine Fletcher smiled while Mrs. Borrodaile spoke; and her smile, though genial and pleasant, was not reassuring.

"Yes, I know all the story," she said, which was a long shot measured by facts; "and I know that Miss Kemball was used most

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shamefully in that transaction—used in a double sense," she added meaningly. "You can tell me nothing new about it, Mrs. Borrodaile."

"And you are satisfied you know the truth?" asked that lady emphatically. "I am very fond of young people, as you know, dear Miss Fletcher; but I am bound to say that my experience of girls is unfavourable. They are generally untruthful, and I would not trust one of them."

"I, on the contrary, would trust most of them greatly, and Patricia Kemball entirely," said Catherine.

"I call that simply offering a premium to deceit," Mrs. Borrodaile answered.

She was a woman who held fast to the doctrine of inherent depravity, and considered trust in one's fellow-creatures an heretical doctrine to be discouraged like Wesleyanism or Socinianism, or any other objectionable weed in the garden of orthodoxy.

"I think if you knew Patricia you would not say this," was Miss Fletcher's answer. "I never knew so lovely a character, so beautiful a nature."

"It is very odd," said Mrs. Borrodaile, crisping her lips. "If she is so charming as you represent, how was it that she could not get on with Mrs. Hamley? I am sure a more correct-minded woman never breathed than dear Mrs. Hamley; and we can judge for ourselves of her kindness by the way in which she has brought up Miss Drummond—a no nearer connection than her husband's cousin! If Miss Kemball was really so sweet, I wonder she did not manage to make things pleasanter for herself at Abbey Holme than by all accounts they were."

"If they were unpleasant, of which I have no doubt, that does not prove that the fault was Patricia's," said Miss Fletcher.

"Of course it proves nothing; but the supposition would be that it was. And at all events it is pleasanter to believe in one's old friends, people too of mature age, rather than in a young stranger of whom one knows nothing."

"I think it is pleasanter to believe in the truth," said Catherine simply, and Mrs. Borrodaile bridled.

"Well," she said rising, "of course it is no business of mine. I merely thought it my duty to warn you, and to let you know that the most unpleasant reports are going about the place in connection with Miss Kemball. This horrid Bank affair for one—her ungovernable temper, so that her poor aunt could not possibly put up with her for another—her loose opinions, so shocking in a young person!—and then this ridiculous assertion that Lord Merrian made her an offer of marriage, which she refused."

"I hear so little gossip I had not heard that before," said Catherine.

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"Not that Lord Merrian proposed?" cried Mrs. Borrodaile shrilly.

"No; not a syllable of it."

"Why all Milltown is ringing with it."

"Who says so?"

"Every one."

"But who first set the report afloat, I mean? Patricia did not, I am sure."

"Oh! I believe Mr. Hamley first mentioned it. I wonder you never heard it, Miss Fletcher! He told Mr. Borrodaile before the fête came off—so long ago as that; and said that this was the reason why Abbey Holme had been excluded from the list of invitations. So I suppose it is true. At least, Miss Kemball must have made them believe it." This was said with a little natural feminine spite; for Mrs. Borrodaile had nailed her colours to the mast now, and was determined to find Patricia faulty on one count if not on another.

"You may see how little she boasts by her not telling me, her nearest friend, that she had had such a flattering offer," said Catherine. "She never gave me the faintest hint of anything of the kind; so she did not plume herself very much on her conquest."

"You might say instead how insincere she is not to have confided in you; but I see that you are infatuated, Miss Fletcher, and no good is to be done with you. However, I have performed my duty," was Mrs. Borrodaile's rejoinder, as she shook hands indignantly, more than ever annoyed with Patricia as the innocent cause of her rebuff.

Had Catherine Fletcher been more skilful—say as skilful as Dora—she would have done Patricia more good. She would have agreed with Mrs. Borrodaile up to a certain point, by which she would have asserted her own sympathy and won her informant's respect. This would have put the envoy of Milltown morality into good humour, because people like to be successful in their work, whatever it may be—private slander or public benefaction. Then, by a cleverly-dropped word here, and a kindly suggestion there, she would have modified some of the harsher tints, softened some of the broader lines. And Mrs. Borrodaile would have adopted her suggestions, thinking them her own original impulses of charitable judgment. Thus she would have seemed to hold with the righteousness of matronly indignation while sweetening its sour doctrine of youthful iniquity; but this kind of thing was as little in Catherine's way as Patricia's. By which she too failed in her possibilities in a society which cares mainly to be flattered, and which dislikes to be taught. This two-faced faculty, which the world calls tact, is that wherein the children of the generation are stronger than the children of light, and wiser in the way of work-a-day policy.

Without a line of deception in her whole character, Patricia was yet not a girl to talk of herself, or to tell the facts of her life

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unasked. She had but few to tell, indeed. Her uncle's death, her engagement with Gordon, and her refusal of Lord Merrian, were the three most important items in her inventory; but as she had never been asked about the last, she had not spoken of it. It would have seemed to her dishonourable had she done so. Of Gordon she had often talked; but naturally; with none of the shyness, the blushing consciousness, which betrays the girl's love-affair. Had he been her brother she could not have spoken of him with more open affectionateness, more confessed pride. It was this very openness which threw her friends off the track; so that it never occurred even to Catherine, who had the woman's keen scent in such matters, that her child, as she called Patricia, was engaged in the formal manner recognised by the world. And Henry Fletcher, who had heard the name of Gordon Frere even less frequently than his sister, suspected less in proportion.

The evening of Mrs. Borrodaile's visit the three were sitting in the drawing-room after dinner, when Catherine, looking up from her book, said somewhat suddenly: "Patricia, Mrs. Borrodaile has been telling me the oddest story about you to-day! I wonder if it is true?"

There were never any secrets at the Hollies; so that Catherine's speaking out before her brother was neither a breach of confidence nor an embarrassment.

"A story about me? What can it be?" said Patricia, meeting the kind smile with one as frank.

"It is about Lord Merrian."

A sudden flush that made her face flame to the tips of her ears was Patricia's first answer; her second, in words, was the natural inquiry: "What did she say?"

"That Mr. Hamley has been telling every one the reason why they were not invited at the Quest, when that fête was given, was because Lord Merrian had made you an offer, and you had refused him."

"I think Mr. Hamley ought to hold his tongue," said Patricia indignantly.

Dr. Fletcher looked at her narrowly. He was arranging a microscopic slide, but he spoilt his object and had to begin again.

"Then it is true?"

"Yes," said Patricia. "But I think it very dishonourable of Mr. Hamley to speak about it."

"You refused Lord Merrian! It was a brave thing to do, child!" cried Catherine warmly, her mind taking in at a glance the whole situation, with the pressure that must have been brought to bear on her.

"I could do nothing else," the girl answered. "I did not love him; besides, how could I, with Gordon?"

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Dr. Fletcher put down his hands.

"What has Gordon to do with it?" asked Catherine, opening her soft brown eyes.

"Everything," Patricia answered with grave simplicity. "Uncle gave me to him the night before he died."

There was a pause of a few moments.

"I did not know you were engaged," then said Catherine, to whom the information had come rather as a shock.

"No? I thought you did. I have spoken of him so often I thought you knew everything," Patricia answered.

"Not so much as I do now," said Catherine, glancing at her brother. "I had no idea that our country lassie had been a potential countess, or that we were some day to lose her."

"Oh, as for losing me, you will not do that for a long time!" said Patricia innocently. "Gordon will not come home for another year at the earliest—perhaps not for five. It all depends on the Admiralty; and no one ever knows what their orders will be." She looked up wistfully. "The time seems long when I think of it," she added. "I should so like to see him again! But it does no good to grumble, and I would rather he did his duty to the service if I did not see him for twenty years, than shirk his work and come home to me."

"That's the right spirit, dear love," said Catherine. "Is it not, Henry?"

"Surely," said Dr. Fletcher rather slowly.

He had taken no part in the conversation; but this was not extraordinary. He was a silent man by nature, and it amused him to hear his sister and her young friend talk, as they did, every evening on all sorts of subjects, while he sat by, generally occupied with his microscope and listening to what they said in between his graver observations and the notes made thereon. But though he was silent, he had become very pale during these last sentences; a kind of greyness had stolen over his face that startled his sister when she looked at him. It was only a change of colour and expression. His manner was the same as ever, quiet, tranquil, self-possessed. And when he called Patricia to come and see the little shell he had at last fixed for her conveniently, not the keenest watcher could have detected a shade of difference in his tone or bearing. Unless indeed, it had been that he was more tender to her than usual.

So the evening passed, and the conversation after a time drifted on to other topics; but not before Patricia, the ice being now broken, gave as circumstantial an account of all matters as she could, which showed the springs of Mrs. Hamley's conduct in a clearer light, if not a fairer. To have been implicated in a crime of which she would not betray the real offender, and to have refused a viscount, were both together reasons sufficiently strong to account for any amount of

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reprobation from a woman of her nature; and neither Catherine nor her brother wondered now at Mrs. Hamley's practical desertion of her niece—"a loss by which we have made our gain," said Demeter lovingly, when Patricia had gone to bed.

And Henry Fletcher assented and said, "Yes, indeed," without looking up from his work. How that evening's conversation affected him, or if it affected him at all, no one ever knew; not even Catherine, his confidante and favourite friend. He was not of the kind to wear his heart on his sleeve for daw or dove; nor yet of the kind to nourish impossible desires or unavailing regrets. Whether he had hoped that Patricia Kemball would have remained with them for ever as their daughter and delight, or whether he had hoped for a still nearer and dearer love, who can say? And was it only a coincidence, the degradation of health which followed so soon on this conversation? No one knew.

All that any one could say or see was that Dr. Fletcher was looking very ill, and had grown quite an old man lately. His hair was greyer, his leathery brown face more marked and puckered, his mild, kind eyes more mournful than of old; and these had always been his characteristics. But as he did not complain no one took much heed of him. They supposed he had been poisoning himself with some of his abominable chemicals, or chilling his poor thin blood by star-gazing when he ought to be in bed and asleep, like a rational Christian gentleman. And if he was ill he had brought it on himself, they concluded; so shut up their hoard of compassion for some better occasion—such as poor Colonel Lowe's embarrassments, which Mr. Hamley took care should now be public property, and the pity it would be if Cragfoot was obliged to be sold. For though Milltown was content to have a self-made Colossus bestriding their town, it did not quite like to see the huge splay foot set down on one of their real gentry. That huge splay foot might crush the Garths of humanity, as many as it would, but society itself was interested in the Nemesis overtaking a spendthrift born in the local purple. Society was just now full of poor Colonel Lowe, whose house was tumbling about his ears; so that between him and Patricia Kemball the Milltown hoppers were full-fed with grist, and tea-party tongues wagged merrily.

They wagged still more when it became known that young Sydney was engaged to Miss Manley, who had a hundred thousand pounds at least for her fortune; and they all said it was the most barefaced thing of its kind they had ever known. In this perhaps, they were not so far out; for the fact of an unpersonable young woman with a large fortune being demanded in marriage by a man of somewhat mildewed name, when the ruin of his house had just been made public, carries a doubtful look with it somehow, and seems to justify unfriendly comment.

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Not that either father or son cared for what was said of them, so long as they touched the material advantages for which they sold themselves. When, years ago, Colonel Lowe had married Lady Anne Graham's daughter, and had married her without settlements and against the wishes of her clearer-sighted friends, the world had made pretty free with the gallant young officer's assumed motives; but the Colonel came in for the Cragfoot estate, and let the world play at ninepins with his motives as it liked. And now when his son was treading in his steps the same kind of disfavour was repeated. They only hoped however, that Miss Manley would be advised by those who knew, and have her fortune settled on herself. She had warning enough in her poor mother-in-law that was to be, they said, who had married in that irrational trust which possesses weak and loving women. The handsome young officer, full of fervour and very much in debt, with a halo of Crimean glory round his curly head, was more to be believed, she thought, than her staid old tiresome friends who drew gloomy pictures, and wanted to have no end of legal straps and backstays. She did not accept their gloomy pictures as in any way applicable to her. Men had married for money and ill-treated their wives afterwards, she acknowledged; of course they had; and would again; but Charles was an exception; and it was absurd, she argued, to give herself to a man she could not trust with her property. In giving herself she entrusted him with something far more precious than Cragfoot; so the two might well go together, and the estate follow her happiness. Wherefore the marriage was celebrated according to their joint wishes; and Lady Anne Graham's well-endowed daughter gave herself in haste and had repented for a lifetime at leisure.

And now the same thing was going to be repeated with Sydney and Julia Manley in that odd way in which events double themselves in certain families. Miss Manley was as much in love with the son as Miss Graham had been with the father, and the ravens of ill-boding croaked their ugly prophecies in vain. She only desired to show her lover how much she believed in him and loved him; and the resolve of a weak woman for love or spite is for the most part unalterable.

Milltown was all agog with the news; but aghast too; for poor Miss Manley was liked well enough in the place, and Sydney was, as we know, distrusted.

Mr. Hamley came home one evening full of the report. He waited until he had drunk his prescribed amount of claret before joining the ladies, and then he began.

"Well, Dora, that precious lover of yours has not been long before he has given you a successor," he said, planting himself on the hearth-rug, and speaking with a kind of contemptuous jocularity, which was not his most becoming manner.

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"What *do* you mean, Mr. Hamley?" answered Dora, innocently.

"That precious scamp, that young Lowe, has engaged himself to Miss Manley; and the fool is going to marry him."

"Indeed!" cried Dora, who just then dropped her book, and had to stoop rather a long time before she could pick it up again.

"Yes, I think it is, indeed! when such shamelessness takes place before one's eyes. He has taken her for her money, that's as plain as the nose on one's face; and that's why he wanted you," was Mr. Hamley's answer.

"You are not very complimentary, Mr. Hamley," said his wife. "I had no more wish that Dora should be his wife than you had, but I would not say so rudely as you do, that he wanted her only for her dower. Dora and Julia Manley are not very much alike, I think!"

"You dear!" purred Dora. "You are always so good to me! But Miss Manley is a great deal better than I am, and perhaps Sy——, Mr. Lowe, does really like her."

Let those explain the contradictions of human nature who can. Dora did not want to go away with Sydney, and she was sorry for his distresses; she did not want to share his poverty, nor indeed did she wish him to be poor at all; she repented her own marriage with him; she was even ashamed of it now that the first excitement had worn off, and she had realised the difficulties and dangers of her position; yet with all this, when she heard that Sydney Lowe was really engaged to Julia Manley, she was almost choked, partly with rage and partly with tears, and could scarcely command herself to speak in her usual tone and manner. Nothing but the deadly fear of discovery, with Mr. Hamley's small keen eyes watching her so narrowly, could have nerved her for her part; but power comes when it is needed, as it came to her now in calmness and self-control.

"I grant all that, Lady," Mr. Hamley answered. "I am not fool enough to place such a cart-horse as that Manley woman and our little Arab here in the same harness; but it looks fishy all the same"——

"It looks what, Mr. Hamley?" interrupted the slow, severe voice of the wifely critic.

He laughed, and shifted his feet noisily.

"A lapse, Lady, a lapse," he said. "Well, then, it looks doubtful when a young man pretends to be broken-hearted for Dora one day and makes up to Miss Manley the next. It looks more like money-bags than love, I must say. For my part," with an assumption of patriarchal experience, "I cannot understand the young fellows of the present day. I am a man as doesn't change myself, either in my admiration for the ladies, or in my sentiments elsewheres. The lady as I have loved once I should for always, and I don't understand this game of skipjack—one down and another up before you can say Jack Robinson. I think that's the way to do, isn't it, Lady?"

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He spoke to his wife, but he looked at Dora; and Mrs. Hamley smiled and said yes, she approved of his fidelity. It was one of the virtues she always had admired in him, and she hoped she should have reason to admire it to the end.

Not much more was said at the time of this projected marriage, and Dora escaped the detection of her secret with her usual cleverness; but when Patricia heard of it, she startled the Fletchers by a curious outburst of anguish and terror, which they had some difficulty in calming. She would not say why the news so powerfully affected her; not even to Catherine, from whom she had not a thought unshared. She only looked white and scared, and said, "No, no, it ought not to be," and "It must not be!" weeping hot, heavy tears, and falling back again into her old position of self-torture—not knowing whether to tell what we know, and so prevent further evil, is the right thing to do; or to keep silence in the presence of sin, and by silence to consent with sinners, may not be at times the truest good. Catherine comforted her as well as she was able, but she could not console her entirely; for to which side soever she turned, she found grief and perplexity and one form of moral evil. Do what she would she could not keep herself pure nor hold her action harmless.

While she was sitting there doing her best to face her difficulties bravely, the Hamley carriage dashed up to the door, and a note was brought in to her from Mr. Hamley, desiring her instant presence at Abbey Holme: Mrs. Hamley was ill. Had it then come at last? Patricia thought, as with trembling hands she threw on her hat and jacket. Had her aunt discovered the whole thing, and was she to be assoiled and reinstated?—taken back to favour, and perhaps taken back to the house? She would be glad of the former; but the latter?

As she turned to go, she threw her arms round Catherine with a feverish grasp.

"Whatever happens we are always friends together, as we are now?" she whispered. "You will not give me back to them?"

"No," said Catherine, kissing her fondly; "you shall not go back to Abbey Holme, my love, save at your own desire."

"Then that will be never!" cried Patricia with a shudder, as she got into the carriage and was borne away—borne away to this house of falsehood and fair-seeming, where nothing was as it looked, and where evil was accepted for good and deception for truth.

Chapter XXXIX.

THE LAST LOOK.

Mrs. Hamley's health had long been declining. She was one of those lean and ascetic women who, with a *cordon bleu* in the kitchen

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and all sorts of cometic vintages in the cellar, eat dry toast for breakfast and drink plain water for dinner. She gave one the impression of being only half nourished and always insufficiently clad; a woman to whom the senses were things accursed, and who kept her luxurious table and wore her magnificent clothes as matters due to her position rather than as personal indulgences in which she took pleasure—obligations for the pride of life, not delights for the lust of the flesh.

This last year had tried her severely. Ever since Patricia's arrival she had been more or less disturbed in mind, and her frail body had suffered in consequence. The last three weeks had put the coping-stone to her troubles. That her niece should be implicated in a crime which she refused to confess, that she should have thrust aside the providential settlement offered to her, and lastly, that she should have preferred the Hollies to Abbey Holme, and Catherine and Henry Fletcher to herself and her husband—all this was too much for her. Add to this the excitement consequent on her husband's election; the breakfasts she had to give, the luncheons, the dinners at which she must preside; the uproar and confusion introduced into her well-ordered household; the bodily fatigue and mental excitement she had to undergo; and it was small wonder if, lying awake all night and fretting all day, now resenting Patricia's absence from their unusual festivities, now resenting those festivities themselves, exhausted and feverish, her health went down, as Mr. Hamley said, "with a run." Her scanty bit of dry toast grew smaller at each breakfast, her temper more uncertain. She was evidently very ill and profoundly wretched; but she would not allow them to send for Dr. Wickham, nor would she recall Patricia. She would own to nothing but fatigue and the east wind; and had it not been for dear Dora, she used to say, she did not know how she should have survived either.

Dear Dora was everything to her. In truth, the girl was sorry to see her suffer, and desperately frightened lest she should die. Her death would indeed be shooting Niagara, with that terrible "And after?" to follow. She was perfectly aware of the contingency it included; indeed, she had known it for years; and though she had encouraged it when it suited her purpose, the knowledge of what had to come when Mrs. Hamley's death should leave Mr. Hamley free, had perhaps had something to do with the ceremony in which Mr. Sydney Lowe had been the principal performer more than a year ago behind the New Road caryatides. But though Mrs. Hamley's death would always have been a terror and a trouble, it was doubly so now, when Sydney's engagement with Miss Manley was made public, and she could not claim even such slight protection as a confession of her love for him might have given. Would she have had courage for that, had she been able? Look where she would the waters were

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closing rapidly round her, and she saw no way of escape to the right or to the left.

Dear Dora was intensely unhappy at this time; terrified and distracted; and her own secret sorrows gave her such a delightful appearance of sympathy—as much from an instinct of self-preservation as from her natural amiability—she attended on Mrs. Hamley with such unremitting care, so deliciously unobtrusive, yet so full of thought and charming management, that, with the propensity there is in human nature to round off characters harmoniously and to find velvet coats without seamy sides, no one who had seen her at this time would have believed a girl, so sweet and full of thought for her dying friend, was able at the same time to be so false and base.

Day by day Mrs. Hamley had grown worse and drawn nearer and nearer to the Great Hour. She had no perceptible ailment that could be catalogued. Weakness, loss of appetite, loss of sleep, frequent faintings, a gradual decay—that long, slow death, of which the stages are so many before the last is reached, and passed—these were the symptoms and the root of her malady. There was nothing special to combat in all this. The machine was wearing out; that was all; and she knew it. She had a tough spirit, and had always made a good fight of it. In poverty of circumstances as in distress of mind she never showed what she suffered, save by increased acerbity of temper. She was peevish in affliction, but she was grim and determined. Even now she had not given up till forced to do so. She had come down punctually to breakfast, and had read the prayers in her quavering treble, though she was obliged to yield so far to her weakness as to sit during the office. She had poured out the tea to the last with her frail and shaking hands that could scarcely lift the massive silver pot, both together; and she had had her poor old face and head dressed with her usual care and precision. It was painful to see the unnecessary struggle that she made. If only she would have consented to her state, and been a comfortable, unpowdered, and unsightly old goody wrapped up in flannel, without beads or bugles, lace or ribbons about her, how much better it would have been, dear Dora used to think; while she said sweetly, to please her: "What a pretty cap that is, dear! Bignold certainly knows how to make caps."

At which Mrs. Hamley would smile complacently, and think she was masking her batteries and fading cleverly.

And all this time she was fretting about Patricia. Too proud to yield to her inward wish for a reconciliation, or to write telling her to come and see her, she was angry that the girl whom she had repulsed so severely did not again beg for grace, divining the moment when it would be granted.

"She must know that I am ill," she used to think, half between

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tears and anger. "My own flesh and blood—my only relation, to whom I have been so kind, a very mother—to treat me with such ingratitude, such heartlessness! It is her evil conscience. She knows that she has sinned, and she is ashamed and afraid to see me."

So she thought, lying awake during the long watches of the night, tossed between her secret consciousness of Patricia's innocence and her determination to find her guilty for her own self-justification; growing weaker day by day; more harassed night by night; till at last the moment came when her will had to go down before disease, and when she must perforce keep the bed from which she could not rise.

Then, and not till then, she desired that Patricia should be sent for; she not having heard of her illness, and to whom Mr. Hamley's hurried note, "Miss Kemball, return with the carriage if you please; Mrs. Hamley is ill and desires to see you," was scarcely sufficient preparation for the terrible change she found.

Propped up in bed, her hair restorers, pads, and braids laid aside with her smart dress-caps, and her scanty whitened locks pushed off from her pinched and sallow face; her eyes sunk in her head; her thin lips, black and dry, drawn back from her teeth; her body wasted; and her hands idly plucking at the sheet—Patricia, suddenly ushered into the presence of her aunt—into the presence of death—could not at first realise what she saw. It was like something unreal; a picture or a dream. She could scarcely believe that that formidable power, of whom she had been so often afraid, should be lying there, a poor, weak, helpless thing appealing only to human pity and dependent on compassion for every act of her life; her arbitrary will set aside; her autocratic power gone; nothing left now but the bare bones of humanity. It was very terrible to her; a sudden reversion of conditions—she so strong, and her aunt who had mastered her so weak—that made her feel almost cruel and undutiful.

She could not repress a grievous little cry as she came up to the bed and took the wasted hand that moved feebly across the sheet towards her, saying, as she carried it to her lips; "I did not know that you were ill, darling aunty; no one told me till this moment."

"I thought you might have come to see me, Patricia," said Mrs. Hamley with feeble reproach.

"If I had only known that I might, I would not have waited to be sent for," she answered tenderly.

The dying woman looked up.

"In spite then of your wickedness, you feel that you owe me some respect?" she said.

Had she been in her ordinary state, her severity of accent would have chilled and checked Patricia; now, her assumption of moral superiority was almost tragical from its impotence.

"I only wanted to love you with my whole heart. Oh, let me

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hear you say that you believe me!" Patricia said earnestly, her honest eyes full of tears.

"I dare say you did," Mrs. Hamley answered after a pause; "I did not see it, but I am willing to believe it—now."

"I never meant to offend you, aunty dear, at any time. I have been ignorant and clumsy, I know: but I always wished to do what was right," said the girl, kissing her hand.

"But you did what was wrong instead," Mrs. Hamley answered, looking up with that strange and awful death-bed scowl which seems more like demoniacal possession than human anger.

Patricia shivered as she met her look, and shut her eyes for an instant; then, as if she put it from her, she said:

"Yet indeed I tried hard to satisfy you, dear, though I failed."

"Yes, you failed—you failed," repeated Mrs. Hamley, half closing her eyes.

"I know I did, to my bitter sorrow; and I never understood how nor why," returned Patricia, bending over her with an earnest caressing gesture, as if she would have taken the poor sick head to her bosom, and given some of the fulness of her own life to the fast-ebbing stream pulsing each moment more faintly in those shrivelled veins.

"If you are sincere in saying that, tell me the truth about the cheque," cried Mrs. Hamley suddenly, with a quick flaming up of her old angry tenacity.

Patricia looked across the bed to where Dora stood, distressed truly, but self-possessed and fully alive to the danger of the moment. She had not braved all the perils which had surrounded her for so many months to yield now to an impulse of weak compassion or puerile conscience. She was sorry for both Mrs. Hamley and Patricia, but she would be more sorry for herself if things were different. Hard as it was on both that the one should die deceived, and the other be condemned while innocent, it would be harder, she thought, on herself, if the mask which she had worn with such success should be taken off now at the last moment, and the labour of a life be undone.

"Dora, help me!" cried Patricia in an imploring tone.

Dora looked at her steadily.

"I cannot help you, Patricia," she answered. "I know nothing about it—you know that I do not," emphatically.

Patricia covered her face. It took all her strength and loyalty to stand up against the agony of this moment, to bear this terrible burden. That her aunt should die believing this grievous falsehood true, believing Dora pure, and ignorant of the awful chapter of further crime contemplated and announced, was of itself sorrow enough for a sincere nature; but also, unselfish as she was, it did seem hard that she should be forced to sacrifice the appearance of

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honour—the thing which was dearest to her in life—for the reality, in maintaining the false repute of another.

The dying woman plucked her feebly by the sleeve.

"Tell me," she said. "Why do you trouble Dora about it?"

Patricia lifted up her face, pale, quivering, but steadfast.

"I cannot tell you, aunt," she said in low distinct tones. "I have promised faithfully that I never would, and I have not got leave to break my word. Only believe that I was innocent in the whole matter—oh believe that dear, for it is true!"

Her aunt gave a pathetic little sigh. She was too weary, too weak to combat longer. She must resign herself to defeat. Undutiful and self-willed even at this supreme moment, she must leave that stubborn spirit now to its own hard course. She had done all she could; and life was fading too fast for struggle.

She turned her wan eyes to Dora. It was rest to her to look at the soft flower-face she knew so well and loved so dearly!—the face that had been, to her fancy and belief, like an open book of which she had read every page from end to end! It was her haven, her comfort; and yet, with the natural sense of family, she regretted even in this her last hour that her own niece had not been as dear and good as her husband's cousin, and had not been able to at least share in the love she gave so freely to this.

"God bless you, my child!" she said in the gasping, interrupted utterance of the dying, "You have been my comfort ever since you entered the house. You have made me happy."

"I have loved you, dear," said Dora, laying her soft hand on the fleshless fingers.

Mrs. Hamley smiled faintly. "Take care of her, Mr. Hamley," she said; for Mr. Hamley had just entered by a side-door, and now stood by Dora.

"I will, my dear—I will," he answered fervently; and put his arm round his young cousin's slight figure, drawing her close up to his ample chest.

"She deserves your fatherly care," said Mrs. Hamley. "I leave her to you. God bless her! God bless you, Dora!"

Dora sobbed, and Mr. Hamley pressed her to him tenderly. Tears were in his eyes too. The woman who was dying there before him had been his true friend, if never his beloved. Though she was leaving the way open for the happiness he had waited for so patiently and defended so jealously, still she had been staunch and loyal in her day. And then his very tenderness for Dora made him pitiful for his wife, just as his natural emotion for her death made him yet more loving to Dora.

"Don't fret, my darling, I will take care of you," he said in a low voice.

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Mrs. Hamley looked pleased.

"Right," she whispered. "Be her father—take care of her."

"Have you no word for me, aunt?" cried Patricia with the passionate cry of the Esau unjustly defrauded. "Bless me too!"

There was a pause. Mrs. Hamley looked at her niece wearily, sternly, sadly.

"God forgive you, and turn your stubborn heart. I forgive you," was then her feeble response made with an effort; and again her eyes turned to Dora. "God bless you, my Dora!" she murmured.

No other word was spoken. The evening sun streamed into the room and showed the pallid face of the dying woman; Patricia's silent agony, yet clear of self-reproach; the grief, the fear, but the self-control that comes of the very need of terror, of Dora; the subdued and decent regret of Mr. Hamley, divided as he was between pity and love, regret and relief. The silence was broken only by the harsh rattle of the labouring breath growing harder, slower, at every instant; by the stifled sobs of the onlookers gathered there to watch but unable to help; when suddenly Mrs. Hamley opened her eyes. It seemed as if she saw something beautiful in the air before her, for a smile, softer and more divine than had ever been on her face before, irradiated her whole countenance. She half-raised herself from her pillow, turning towards Patricia. The last spark of life blazed up in her eyes with a sudden vividness that burnt more like fire than human life. She could not speak, though her dry lips moved; but her look fastened itself on the girl with a yearning and intense desire, a passionate longing that was as mournful as a cry.

Patricia stooped over her and took the half-raised body in her arms.

"What is it, dear?" she said. "Do you know me now?"

The face that looked into hers was scarcely Aunt Hamley's face at all; it was that of a creature divinely illumined, brightened with more than human knowledge, burning with more than human love. It lasted only for a moment; but that moment seemed an eternity, during which her very soul had looked from her eyes into Patricia's. Then her head sank back on the girl's arm, her glazed eyes turned, her jaw dropped, her laboured breathing ceased; and she was dead. But she died in the arms of her niece, and her last look had been hers.

Patricia laid her head reverently on the pillow, and with a strange superstitious feeling kissed her mouth for the faint lingering breath that might be about her lips.

Mr. Hamley stretched out his large hand and closed her eyelids.

"Thus die the just," he said with pompous solemnity; while Dora drew a deep breath as one who has safely skirted by a danger, though the next instant she slightly shivered, knowing what was before her.

To Patricia the world felt wider and darker somehow now than it

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had done this morning. Her last relative had gone, and she remembered with a pang of self-reproach—how base it seemed!—her terror lest her aunt should send for her to live at Abbey Holme again, and once more plunge her into the old life of misunderstanding and "consenting with sinners." If it could have brought her back again how willingly she would have returned to the stifling air and unwholesome morals of Abbey Holme! If her own sorrow could have ensured that poor dead soul's peace, how gladly she would have paid the price! But the door was closed and the seal set for all time now; and as the past had been so must it remain for eternity. She could only hope that what had been wrong here was made right there; but for this world all was over.

Yet it was cruel. Dora blessed and loved and thanked, and Dora the cause of it all! Dora who had lived a life of deception from the first, who had simply offered a manner for a reality, a facile temper for a heart, and falsehood for truth; and she who had failed—she scarcely knew why, but surely not for want of trying to succeed by faithful endeavour—yet she was simply forgiven and Dora was blessed! She wished her aunt had blessed her too. She was glad of that strange loving look; it seemed to soften the hardness of the last word, and lessen its injustice; but she wished that she had blessed her! She had not forfeited this holy consecration of death; she had been loyal to her promise; but in her loyalty she had not injured her aunt, and she had done nothing to make her unworthy of her blessing. It had been a less sorrow to believe her, Patricia, guilty of some mysterious misdemeanour than it would have been to have known Dora's life of deception and falsehood. She saw no different way of action for herself had she her time to come over again; unless indeed she had suspected Dora from the beginning, and refused to do the service asked of her. But still her thoughts went back to the central point of her sorrow at this moment; she wished that her aunt had blessed her—that she had spoken just one comfortable word of love and trust before the time for speech had passed for ever!

Presently Mr. Hamley spoke. "Your dear aunt has died forgiving you," he said to Patricia, his arm still about Dora; "so do I."

He held out his hand over the bed, and Patricia, waking up from her dreamy thoughts, put hers into it. It was like a compact across the dead.

"Thank you," she said simply.

She knew he meant well, and she accepted his meaning in lieu of the right. They shook hands solemnly; after which Patricia stooped down and lovingly kissed the white still face on the pillow. Dora and Mr. Hamley kissed it too, both with a certain shudder; and then they all went down into the drawing-room, when Patricia prepared to go.

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"Must you leave now?" said Mr. Hamley, meaning to be kind. "If you must you must; but remember that Dora will always be your friend."

He said this as if he had offered her a coronet.

Patricia did not answer. She looked at Dora hurriedly, not wishing to draw suspicion on her; and indeed, on her own account, not caring to look at her longer or more narrowly than was absolutely necessary.

The fair downward-bended face had a look on it of such abject terror, overmastering it for a moment, as humiliated Patricia to see. How would she act now? Dora thought. Her silence during Mrs. Hamley's lifetime had been always sure, but she did not feel so certain of it now. There was this marriage with Miss Manley publicly talked about: would she keep her counsel faithfully even through this? But what of the future? When she too had heard that word which had to come, what would she do? Would she lift up her voice and cry aloud, and, to prevent the commission of a sin, tell all she knew, and so dash her former friend headlong to destruction? or would she still keep loyal silence and consent with sin and sinners for the sake of truth? This was why she looked so terrified that it touched the braver heart with a sense of shame and shared humiliation to see it.

But Patricia was far from suspecting the truth of Mr. Hamley's feeling, or Dora's cause for fear. She, like her aunt, had no other idea but that of a fatherly affection on his side and a filial love on hers; and as for Sydney Lowe, she supposed that now, Aunt Hamley being dead, Dora would come forward openly and prevent the illegal marriage of her husband by taking up her own publicly. She was sorry for her too, all things considered; and notwithstanding her own griefs against her would not have added a feather's weight to her troubles.

"I hope you understand that it will be a good thing for you to have Dora as your friend," Mr. Hamley went on to say. "Dora will have a large amount of power in her hands; she will be mistress of Abbey Holme, and you will want some one to stand by you. Dora will stand by you. I make bold to say so much. You make her your friend, and all will come out square."

"Thank you, but I shall not ask her for her help," said Patricia hastily.

Dora looked up, but over her head, not into her face. She avoided Patricia's eyes as she spoke.

"I will always be glad to help you, dear," she said sweetly. "You are *her* niece; and this kind, good friend," turning to Mr. Hamley, and looking at him with shy affection and covert and most delightful consciousness, "this dear friend has always wished you well and been good to you. I can do nothing better than carry out his wishes."

"I do not know what you mean, exactly," said Patricia with a certain

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stately bearing, drawing herself away. "I want no help of any kind, and what I want more than I have I can work for. The greatest good that you could have done me, Dora, before she died, you refused; I want nothing of you now!"

"You take high ground, Miss!" said Mr. Hamley with an annoyed air.

"I mean nothing offensive, but I can accept no favour at your hands, Mr. Hamley, nor at Dora's," said Patricia.

"You need not be afraid. Affairs will be properly conducted, and not the most particular-minded person, as I call it, will have a word to say," put in Mr. Hamley hastily.

He took it that she knew his heart and mind, and that she resented his intentions. And for a moment, the thought flashed across him whether "that tale of Gordon Frere was all a bam, and had the girl taken a liking for himself? She had always been uncommon good to him, and more unlikely things had happened."

"I am sure you will do all that is right," answered Patricia, believing him to mean the funeral or the disposition of his wife's property to Dora, or something else in the way of business, she did not know what; "but Dora knows quite well why I would not accept a favour from her, and why now that poor aunty has gone I have no place here and never shall have again."

"My goodness! Patricia, I know nothing of the kind! I have not the least idea of what you mean!" cried Dora roused to unusual energy of voice and temper by the imminence of her peril.

"Dora! how can you carry on this awful thing with what I know, and you know too, and with what we have just seen!" cried Patricia, pressing her hands on her heart.

"What the dickens does the girl mean?" cried Mr. Hamley, looking at her in a curiously embarrassed way.

If it was what he thought, her sentiments, though flattering and predisposing him to generous treatment and kindly judgment, were decidedly in the way at the present moment, and he wished her to understand as much.

"I have not the remotest idea," said Dora, simply. Then in a low voice, she added, "Our poor dear thought her mad, and I do really believe she is."

"It looks like it," he answered in the same key.

He went up to Patricia, and took both her hands in his, speaking to her in that peculiar way in which people speak to maniacs—rather loud, in an artificial voice, every word staccato and distinct.

"Yes, yes, Dora knows all about it," he said, wagging his head in a soothing manner. "Dora quite understands it all—you hear? she quite understands what you mean; so go home now like a good girl, and tell Miss Fletcher to put your feet in hot water. It will draw

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the blood from your head. Bad thing, blood in the head, my dear," pointing to his own forehead with his forefinger; "hot footbath will do you good."

"I don't understand you," said Patricia, looking at him in blank amazement. "What do you mean?"

Mr. Hamley rang the bell.

"Jones," he said, when the man entered the room, "is the carriage waiting?"

"Yes, sir," answered Jones.

"Now, my dear Miss Kemball, let me send you to your friends," said Mr. Hamley graciously. "Jones, tell Bignold to put on her bonnet and escort Miss Kemball to the Hollies. I do not like her to go alone; Mrs. Hamley did not like her to go alone," with a sudden sigh. "She might do herself a mischief," in a whisper to Dora.

And Dora answered "Yes. It is better to send Bignold."

How lucky it was that she thought of making Patricia mad! Whatever she might say now Mr. Hamley would not believe her, and if she said too much she could easily get her locked up. Only the ravings of a diseased brain taking the false impressions characteristic of disease and accusing those who are the nearest and dearest of impossible crimes! It was a happy thought, and she was infinitely relieved by it; though indeed she was not cruel or hard by nature, only driven into both cruelty and hardness by fear and falsehood. And when she thought of getting Patricia locked up in a lunatic asylum if she told too much, she felt something like a person who is being fast surrounded by the tide, when he suddenly strikes on a pathway up the cliffs which he had not known nor foreseen, and whom it would but little discompose if he had to fling down an unoffending sheep or lamb that stood in his way and made his escape else impossible.

Patricia at first refused both Bignold and the carriage; but when Mr. Hamley insisted so strongly that her refusal became contentious, she yielded, and suffered him to take her out to the door on his arm, as he had brought her in just about a year ago. As she passed through the hall she gave one sudden sob as if her heart would break; and Mr. Hamley patted her hand affectionately. The new idea that had taken possession of him was flattering if inconvenient; and he felt that he could afford to be compassionate to the poor soul. Then they shook hands together, and he was really quite tender to her, so much so that she wondered at it and the servants wondered too, as he assisted her into the carriage, and so sent her back to the Hollies in state, and guarded. She little suspected however, that the former maid was her present keeper, and that she was regarded by Mr. Hamley on the one hand as a lunatic, dangerous to leave alone, on the other as a poor dear unfortunate young woman who had contracted a not unnatural but wholly unreturnable affection for himself.

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"And now," she said, after she had told her friends how her aunt had died—told them too with many tears of that strange earnest look, and how she seemed to feel in it that the poor darling had at the last moment recognised her innocence, and what a comfort it was that she had died actually in her arms—when all this was told, "and now," she said, "we must come to some understanding about myself. I did not mind staying here so long as poor aunt lived—somehow, it did not seem like fastening myself on you, because, I suppose you could have sent me back at any hour when you were tired of me. But now it is different. I cannot live on you for ever; I must do something for myself."

"Nonsense!" said Henry Fletcher.

"Henry is right," said Catherine. "Besides, my dear, to take up your own point, you cannot do anything that will keep you. No one who has not a specialised education can make a reasonable income; and so few women have a specialised education! You, my darling, certainly have not."

"But I can learn something," said Patricia a little vaguely.

"We must first of all arrange what you can learn, and what you can utilise when learnt," Catherine answered, as if arguing a possible point.

"You know how much I love you both," said Patricia tenderly, as she returned to the charge. "You know I came to you like your own child when I was in trouble; but how can I go on living here, perhaps for years, till Gordon comes home and is able to marry me? I am sure you must both feel it is better and nobler to do something for myself."

"So it would, if we were not ourselves," Dr. Fletcher said. "If you were with anyone else, I would counsel you to go out into the world and be industrious and independent; but not from us. We love you too well," he added, looking at her quietly.

"Patricia," said Catherine, glancing at her brother: "I am going to tell you something; something about myself that you have never heard. Henry knows it all, so it is nothing that will shock or startle him. Long before you were born, long before your father married, he and I were friends—the dearest friends! My darling, he was the only man I ever loved; and at one time he loved me. But then," she added hastily, "he had not seen your mother. Still we were friends and lovers in earlier days, and but for a mere chance we should have been married. And does not that give me a certain claim to be your pro-mother now?"

Tears stood in her eyes, and the round, soft, matronly cheek was pale while she spoke. A woman's heart never grows old, and the love which, by long years, has become a habit of remembrance and is no longer a present influence, has nevertheless always the same power to move her when spoken of. Catherine Fletcher's love had been

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very true and very deep. It had saddened her life for many a long day; and for all that it was a thing of the past now and she was entirely happy in her life, for all that she was a childless old maid and her only love had married and died so many years ago—she never could speak of him without tears. The habit of remembrance was the habit of sorrow too; and deep down in her heart was that everlasting spring of grief which, however closely it might be covered up, would never run dry. Ah! the graves we all carry about with us! the sorrows that time only scars over and never heals!

"Then uncle knew it!" cried Patricia, as she suddenly remembered her uncle's look when Gordon was speaking of Mr. Fletcher, the solicitor, and how he had mentioned "bonny Kate" so kindly.

"Yes, I have no doubt he did; what there was to know, which was not much," said Catherine. "He and your poor father were very fond of each other, and trusted each other entirely, though they were so different in character, and your uncle so much the older of the two. But now I think the question is settled. You will look on me as a kind of stepmother, Patricia? They are not all as bad as the fairy-books make out. I think I have known one or two who have been faithful, and who have deserved the love they gained."

"Yes, you are my mother!" cried Patricia, throwing her arms round Catherine's neck with a passionate burst of self-surrender; "and I will be your daughter now and for ever. This is home, it is not dependence!"

"Now you are a good girl, and a wise one," said Henry quietly; while Catherine, crying too, for the silly sympathy of tears to which even strong-hearted women yield, could only kiss the dear young face that was resting on her breast, and call her "daughter" and "dear child," while feeling as if she was holding Reginald with her in her arms—while feeling as if *he* was there, and knew what she felt, and loved her for what she was doing.

So that little hitch was got over satisfactorily. Patricia was formally adopted into the Hollies as the daughter of the house, and Dr. Fletcher was careful to call her "my sister's child" when he spoke of her—which was not often.

But Milltown, having a suspicious mind, was not quite certain whether it approved of the arrangement or not; and, at all events, it was quite sure that the Hollies was just the worst home that odd girl could have found, and that she, in her turn, was just the most undesirable kind of young person those foolish people could have adopted. And, good heavens! why did they want to adopt any one? These things always turn out badly, prophesied the malcontents; and the best wisdom in life is to accept the fewest responsibilities, and to interfere least with other folks' concerns.

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Henri de La Rochejacquelin and La Vendée.

By the Author of 'Mirabeau,' etc.

On the southern bank, and near the mouth of the Loire, partly in Poitou and partly in Anjou, is a tract of country which, previous to the first Revolution, was known as *le pays de Bocage*, but which afterwards obtained a terrible celebrity under the name of La Vendée.* A more purely pastoral district it would be impossible to conceive. Picture to your imagination a vast expanse of undulating pasturage divided by high, luxuriant hedges, rows of pollard oaks and narrow streams, here and there the monotonous green varied by patches of yellow corn, but more frequently by golden furze bushes or huge lumps of grey granite rising above the soil, and by frequent masses of dark wood, small in extent, but of almost impenetrable thickness. There are numbers of hillocks, but no hills; verdant banks dipping into hollows, but no valleys; there are no cultivated parks and gardens, no splendid *châteaux*, to render the landscape ornate or imposing, or to modify its primeval wilderness. Only two main roads, seventy miles apart, but running nearly parallel, intersect this sequestered region; the other thoroughfares are mere narrow paths and lanes, which in winter become watercourses, crossing and recrossing each other at the extremity of nearly every field, but so devious and labyrinthine that even the natives sometimes lose their way among them within a few miles of their homes.

The manners of the inhabitants of this Arcadia were in accordance with its aspects. The *noblesse* lived in great, rambling, uncouth-looking *châteaux*, which formed the centres of little towns of farms and cottages, in which dwelt the tenants and labourers of the estate. All classes blended together in a familiarity almost patriarchal, yet always respectful; for nowhere were distinctions of birth more regarded. The nobles did not lease out their land, but divided the produce with the farmer. The farms being small, a seigneur had some twenty or thirty tenants, with whom he lived in close relationship, sharing their joys and sorrows, their prosperity and their losses, in all of which his own interests were concerned. He was present at the weddings of their children, and mingled with their guests. On Sundays and fête days, they and their families came up to the *château*,

* This title, however, comprehended a much greater extent of country than the Bocage, a name applied only to the more inland part of the tracts.

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and the wife and children of the *seigneur* danced with them, in summer in the courtyard, in winter in the great barn.

Almost their sole amusement was hunting, not miserable hares and foxes, but wolves, boars, and mighty stags; and the place of meeting was usually given out after the service by the *curé*, who, stripping off his gown, shouldered his gun and joined the sportsmen. Crime was almost unknown, lawsuits seldom heard of, peace and goodwill reigned supreme.

And yet this little paradise, than which no spot in all France would have seemed less likely, became the scene of one of the bloodiest struggles and of some of the noblest heroisms of the Revolution. In the parish of St. Aubin de Baubigné, near Chantillon-sur-Sèvre, in a desolate and thickly-wooded spot in the very heart of the ancient "Bocage," surrounded by a deep moat, stands the blackened ruins of an ancient *château*. Those dismantled towers, inhabited now only by the owl and the bat, bear the name La Durbellière. It was there that a celebrated and heroic leader of a fatal war, Henri du Verger, Comte de La Rochejacquelin, was born, on the 3rd of August, 1772. La Rochejacquelin was one of the most ancient and distinguished families of the province. Henri was destined from his birth to the military profession. When the Revolution broke out, he was completing his studies at the school at Sorrèze. In 1791, he arrived in Paris, and entered himself among the *garde constitutionnelle*, which had replaced the ancient body-guard of the *maison du roi*. When that was disbanded, he still remained near the person of the king, and was in the Tuileries on the terrible 10th of August. He escaped the massacre by little short of a miracle, and, after a while, succeeded in getting out of Paris and arriving safely at La Durbellière. But all his family had emigrated, and he found himself alone in the *château* in the midst of a hostile population, the parish of St. Aubin de Baubigné having gone over to the Republicans, until his cousin, the Marquis de Lescures,* who was destined to be another hero of the Vendéan war, offered him the shelter of his roof, beneath which a number of Royalists were already gathered.

Henri was at this time just twenty years of age, simple, and almost bashful in manners, with a graceful indolence, beneath which slumbered volcanic fires, a sweet and noble countenance full of animation, a tall and elegant figure, fair hair, eyes with the glance of an eagle, and an oval face, whose contour was rather English than French.

But although a few of the towns had declared for the Republic, the peasants remained faithful to their chiefs, their king, and their pastors, and more especially to the latter, a simple body of men, who

* The first husband of the lady who afterwards married Louis de La Rochejacquelin and wrote the memoirs of her famous brother-in-law.

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spoke their *patois*, shared in all their pastimes and occupations, and were nearly all born and bred among them. Theirs was no very elevated form of religion: a veneration for crucifixes and relicts was its strongest feature; but it was very earnest and very devout.

It was the ejection of a number of priests, on account of refusing to take the oaths required by the Assembly, which brought about the first disturbances. But it was not until the Convention had sent orders for a levy of three hundred thousand men for the army that the insurrection became serious. It broke out at St. Florent, on the 10th of March, 1793. Finding the people resolved to resist the conscription, the commander of the "Blues"* ordered his men to fire upon them. Happily, no one was killed, but the youths, aroused to fury by this attempt upon their lives, attacked the military with such impetuosity that in a very short time they put them to the rout, pillaged the municipality, and celebrated their victory by making a bonfire of all the papers they could lay hands upon.

There lived at the time in the village of Pin-en-Manges a man named Jaques Cathelineau. He was only an itinerant hawker, a peasant by birth; but he possessed a powerful mind, some education, and was held in high esteem by his neighbours, on account of his admirable character and true piety; so much so that he afterwards obtained the title of "the Saint of Anjou," and in battle men struggled to be near him, thinking they must be safe from wounds and death while about so holy a person. When the news of this revolt was brought to Jaques Cathelineau, he was busy making bread for his family. Wiping his arms, he put on his coat. His wife implored him, for the sake of their children, not to rush into danger. "God will watch over my children while I defend His cause," he answered, and hastened to the market-place, where he harangued the peasants, and called upon them to take up arms and to resist the tyranny of the Republicans to the death. Some twenty or thirty of the more enthusiastic answered his appeal, and followed him to the next village, where his eloquence induced about a hundred more to join his cause.

With these few undisciplined ill-armed adherents he attacked a military post guarded by eighty soldiers, dispersed them, and captured a piece of cannon. Encouraged by this success, he and his men marched on to a second station guarded by two hundred soldiers; these were also put to flight and three pieces of cannon captured. The next day, he was joined by another band from a neighbouring village, the leader of which had slain a *gendarme*. Two days afterwards, he mustered a force one thousand strong, with which he attacked Chollet, a considerable town, defeated five hundred Republicans, and took possession of their money, arms, and ammunition.

Easter approaching, the little army broke up, and each man

* The name given by the peasants to the Republican soldiers.

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returned to his home, that he might spend the holy week in prayer and mortification. A body of Republican troops, who had been sent from Angers to quell the insurrection, traversed the country from end to end without meeting a belligerent or encountering the slightest hostility. But Easter Sunday over, and their religious duties discharged, the peasants again took up their arms, and applied, for the first time, to the neighbouring *noblesse* to lead them. M. de la Charette was the first to answer the appeal, and became the leader of the insurgents in Lower Poitou.

In the meantime, scarcely anything of these doings was known at Clisson, M. de Lescures' residence, until a body of troops arrived to demand that all arms, horses, and ammunition within the *château* should be delivered up to them. The men were not very rigorous in the execution of their orders, and were easily put off with four or five worthless animals and some equally useless arms. But as the insurrection assumed more formidable proportions, the Convention called upon the gentry to assist in putting it down. A consultation was held at Clisson, and the unanimous decision arrived at by both male and female was, that they would die rather than arm against the peasants.

For a time they lived in a state of great alarm, continually hearing of numerous arrests being made in the country round, and not knowing but an hour may bring their turn. One day, there came to the *château* a peasant, a messenger from Mademoiselle de La Rochejacquelin to her nephew Henri. "Sir," he said, "it is reported that you will have to draw to-morrow for the militia at Boismé. The peasants will probably rise rather than submit to be drafted. Come with us, the whole country wishes for you, and will obey you."

It required only such words as these to rouse the young hero to action; he at once resolved to accept the invitation. Lescures eagerly desired to join him, but was reluctantly compelled to yield to the prayers of his wife, in which Henri also joined, not to quit Clisson. Some of the more timid would fain have deterred La Rochejacquelin as well, by representing that the step he was about to take would endanger the safety of those whom he left behind; but these suggestions were quickly overruled. "If you are arrested, I will rescue you!" were his parting words.

Their fears were soon realised. On the morning after Henri's departure the whole family was arrested. The order, however, had been issued ten days previously, but so popular was Lescures in the neighbourhood that its execution was deferred until the last moment. The prisoners were conveyed to Bressuire, where they narrowly escaped being massacred. A body of Marseillaises having arrived in the town, proposed that all prisoners should be put to death, in order to strike terror to the Royalists. The atrocious proposition

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was carried into effect, but fortunately the Lescures were purposely forgotten until they were rescued by the arrival of their friends.

The day after Henri de La Rochejacquelin became a leader of the revolt he found himself at the head of ten thousand men. "My friends," he said, addressing them, "if my father were here, you would have confidence in him; for me, I am only a child, but I will show myself by my courage worthy to command you. If I advance, follow me; if I fall back, slay me; if I am killed, avenge me." The first place they attacked was the village of Aubiers, where they defeated the Republicans, slew seventy of their number, and captured two pieces of cannon. During the action, Henri is said to have himself fired two hundred shots.

Lescures now determined to join the insurgents, and Clisson became the rendezvous of all the Royalists of the neighbourhood, who came thither to practise military exercises, while Madame made white cockades as fast as her fingers could ply the needle. This honoured name brought forty parishes over to the cause, and twenty thousand men rallied beneath the standards of Henri and his cousin. It was a motley and uncouth army they commanded. Its costume was that of the country, grey or blue serge, large gaiters, broad-brimmed hats, from beneath which the men's long hair fell to their shoulders. But no two were armed alike; they carried old muskets, scythes, huge clubs, sticks, and knives attached to poles. Some had pistols in their girdles, and guns and sabres suspended from their waists by packthread. Some wore white, some green, some black cockades, but all had the red consecrated heart sewn upon their coats, and a chaplet hanging from a button. Their horses were of all colours and sizes, and some had pack-saddles, with ropes for stirrups.

Their discipline was as simple and unmilitary as their costume. In preparing for an expedition, the army was divided into so many columns, each destined for a different point of attack. When the men were assembled, a general would cry out, "Such and such an officer" (naming him) "goes that way; who will follow him?" Those of the peasants who belonged to his estate would step forward; and so on with the rest until each division was completed. In drill, and even in battle, none of the usual military words of command were used; it was, "Go towards that house—towards that large tree," instead of "To the right—to the left."

Their strategy and mode of fighting were equally primitive; it was a purely guerilla warfare. The country, as described in the first page of this article, was everywhere crossed by high hedges. Round these they would creep and suddenly open fire upon the enemy when they least suspected their vicinity. As soon as the troops began to waver, they would dash over and through the brambles with loud shouts, and such fierce impetuosity, that they seldom failed to carry

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all before them, and seldom lost one man to five of their opponents. Hidden behind their leafy screens, the musketeers could not aim at them. When they saw the flash of the artillery, they cast themselves flat upon their faces, let the shot fly over their heads, and then, before the gunners could reload, they were upon them. If repulsed, they disappeared as though by magic through the hedges among the devious lanes into the deep hollows and thick woods, where they formed new ambuscades, but where the enemy dared not follow them.

Whether the object of the expedition was gained or lost, nothing could keep the peasants together for any length of time, or prevent them returning occasionally to their homes, and the chiefs were frequently left with a few hundreds, who, perhaps, had no homes to go to; but whenever some new enterprise was set afoot, they assembled again as quickly as they had dissolved. The generals sent round to all the parishes, ordered the tocsin to be sounded, and this requisition to be read to the inhabitants: "In the holy name of God and by the king, this parish is invited to send as many men as possible to such a place, on such a day and hour, and to bring provisions with them." The summons was obeyed with the most prompt alacrity. Each man brought bread with him, and the generals provided a certain quantity of provisions besides. The rich gave with the utmost liberality, and the parishes sent carts with bread to meet the army; while the women, on their knees, telling their beads, watched at the roadside, to offer them food as they passed. The sick and wounded, whether Royalists or Republicans, were well cared for, and were placed under the care of a sisterhood of nuns at St. Laurent-sur-Sèvre.

So repugnant were the peasants to all the usages of war, that no inducement could make them stand sentinel or even form a patrol; only the officers would perform this duty. At the sound of the first gun the women and children hastened in a body to the churches or prostrated themselves in the fields to pray for the victory of their cause.

No characteristic of these primitive people was more marked than their devoutness. They never omitted offering up prayers before going into action, religious services were celebrated three times a day, and at every shot they fired they made the sign of the cross. Once, while rushing forward to attack a battery, they came suddenly upon a crucifix raised in a hollow. In an instant every hat was doffed, every man was upon his knees, heedless of the shots which rained about him like hail. A momentary prayer, and all were upon their feet again, charging as impetuously as though no interruption had occurred.

A devotion so simple was necessarily allied to superstition. There was an old twelve-pounder which the Republicans had taken from the

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Château Richelieu, and which the Royalists recovered in the first engagement. This cannon was of very fine workmanship, loaded with ornaments, and with inscriptions in honour of Louis the Thirteenth and the great Cardinal; they named it Marie Jeanne, decked it with flowers and ribbons, treated it almost like a sentient being, hugging and kissing it, and requesting even the ladies to do the same. For some reason, probably because it was the first piece of ordnance that fell into their hands, they attributed to it miraculous powers which would preserve them from defeat while they retained it. Once again it fell into the enemy's hands, and prodigies of valour were displayed in its recapture.

No deeds of cruelty or rapine stained their cause.* Their worst act of violence was to cut down the trees of liberty the Republicans had planted, make a bonfire with them, and dance round the blaze, or to tie tricolored cockcades to their horses' tails in derision of their foes. Not even for the atrocious murders committed by the Marseillaises at Bressuire did they exact any retaliation; they did not even pillage a shop of the town. The Countess de La Rochejacquelin relates, in her Memoirs, a touching instance of this honesty. She overheard one peasant expressing to another how much he longed for some tobacco. "Is there not any in the town?" asked his companion. "Oh, plenty, but I have no money to buy it!" was the answer. It never entered his honest head to take it. It need scarcely be added that the Countess, then Madame de Lescures, immediately caused a supply of the article to be purchased and distributed among the men.

Some of the officers were gentlemen, others citizens, others peasants; every soldier whose bravery or intelligence was conspicuous, no matter what his station in life, was considered to be an officer by right. But this mixture of incongruous elements produced no jealousy or dissension. Devoted to one cause, all differences of rank were forgotten. In this camp was the true equality, to which the Republicans only pretended.

Most conspicuous among the leaders was Henri de La Rochejacquelin, who had already gained the agnomen of "the Intrepid." His ardour and daring inspired the soldiers with confidence and enthusiasm. He was merciful as he was brave, and would frequently engage in single combat with a prisoner, to give him the chance of regaining his liberty. With him all was impulse. During a council of war, he would fall asleep, and when reproached for indifference, would make answer, "Why did you make me a general? I only wish to be a hussar, for the pleasure of fighting." He frequently exposed

* Not, at least, until Republican atrocities, hereafter to be related, had driven them to fury and desperation. An exception, however, must be made against Charette's followers, who carried out a system of reprisals almost from the first.

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his life with criminal recklessness. He persisted in rendering himself fatally conspicuous by wearing a red handkerchief round his head, another round his neck, and several twisted together to form a sash about his waist. During action, the Blues would cry out, "Fire at the red handkerchief." Finding him obstinately bent upon retaining this decoration, every officer adopted the same fashion, so that he became no longer distinguishable from the rest.

A leader of quite another character was Lescures, although equally brave and heroic; his temper was cooler and more deliberate, added to which he possessed considerable knowledge of the art of war. His clemency was exhaustless, and no provocation could induce him to put a captive to death. He is said to have frequently saved more lives after a battle than had been lost during its course.

Of the other commanders, after Cathelineau and Charette, already referred to, the most remarkable were M. de Bonchamp, M. d'Elbée, and M. Stofflet. The forces under the command of the seven generals amounted to eighty thousand men.

The first operations undertaken by the Royalists after the capture of Bressuire were directed against Thouars. In forcing the passage of a bridge, Lescures was left alone, exposed to the fire of the defenders; his clothes were rent by their bullets, but he remained unhurt, and was presently joined by Henri. Another charge, and the bridge was taken; the Republicans were in disorder, and La Rochejacquelin was clambering up the wall, by the help of his friend's shoulders, and hurling stones at the flying inhabitants. Quetineau, the Republican general, was treated with the utmost generosity, rather as a friend and associate than an enemy, and was given a bed even in M. Bonchamp's chamber.

From Thouars, after capturing Porthenay and Châtaigneraie, they proceeded to Fontenay, where Lescures was again exposed, alone, to the fire of six cannons charged with grape; his hat was pierced, one spur shot off, and even his boot torn by the discharge; but, turning to his men who were wavering, he exclaimed, "You see these fellows can take no aim, come on!" and again he carried all before him. They captured forty pieces of cannon and an immense store of ammunition, together with a box containing nine hundred thousand francs. A great number of prisoners were taken. Having no strong places in which to confine them, they could only massacre them, after the way of the Blues, or release them and exact their parole not to again serve against the king. The former was not to be thought of; but what security had they the parole would be kept? Suddenly a happy expedient was suggested—cut off their hair; thus, if they served again, at least within a certain time, they would be recognised, and if re-captured made to pay the penalty of their perjury.

After the taking of Fontenay, a large number of the peasants

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departed to their homes; but, having settled their affairs and related their exploits to their wives and neighbours, they returned and laid siege to Saumur. Here M. de Lescures was wounded, and La Rochejacquelin performed another act of rash and almost boyish daring. During the storming of the fortifications he cast his hat over the entrenchments. "Let us see who will find it again," he cried, and leaped over the glacis, followed by his men; and rashness was again triumphant. Twelve thousand prisoners were taken, who, like the former captives, were shorn of their locks and released upon parole; on the side of the assailants the loss was only four hundred men.

When the battle was over, Lescures assembled the officers, and gave it as his opinion that, the insurrection having assumed such proportions, it was necessary to appoint a general-in-chief. "And I give my vote for Cathelineau," he said, in conclusion. The choice was universally applauded; and no greater proof could be produced of the utter absence of all class interests in this struggle than the election by the *noblesse* of a peasant to supreme command.

The terror which the Vendéans had by this time inspired in the Republican cities of Brittany and their own confident courage are well illustrated in the following anecdote:—After the evacuation of Angers, four young men galloped away to La Flèche, ten leagues in advance of the army, entered the town, shouting "Vive le Roi!" and calling out that ten thousand Royalists were close behind, compelled the inhabitants to trample upon their tricolors, burn their tree of liberty, and give every sign of submission. Then, having fully carried out their jest, they galloped back to their friends, in high glee.

It was now resolved to push on to Nantes; but great numbers of the peasantry, disliking to go so far away from their homes, deserted, and only eight thousand men arrived before the town. A battle ensued, which raged during eighteen hours, and ended in the dispersal of the Vendéans; but, saddest of all, the good Cathelineau was mortally wounded. He was conveyed to St. Florent, where he lingered some days. Crowds gathered about the house he lay in, praying on their knees for his recovery. When all was over, one of his relations appeared before these people, saying, "The good general has rendered his soul to Him who gave it, that He might avenge His glory."

With his death the heroic epoch of the war may be said to have closed. The Convention had placed an army under the command of General Westermann, who ravaged the whole country with fire and sword, burning villages, granaries, and *châteaux*, Clisson and Durbellière among the number. Then began sad reprisals. At the retaking of Châtillon the peasants would give no quarter until M. de Lescures cried out that he would defend the prisoners against

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anybody. It was with much difficulty Westermann himself escaped with three hundred officers. Other actions followed in favour of the Royalists, and the Republicans were completely dispersed.

Large reinforcements were, however, continually poured into the district; and the insurgents were soon compelled to confine their actions to the defensive. M. de Lescures was stationed upon his estates. As soon as he returned, all his tenants brought him their rents, although they had been absent fighting so long. As a matter of course he refused to receive them.

The Convention now issued the atrocious decree that, unless they immediately submitted, all the inhabitants of the rebellious district, whether man, woman, or child, should be put to the sword; that their habitations should be burned, and every tree and hedge cut down. And these orders were most faithfully executed by an army of one hundred thousand murderers. But still the Vendéans succeeded in checking this invasion at almost every point. Boys of the most tender age took up arms, some not above nine or ten years old. One little fellow of seven stood fire undauntedly; and even the women fought to "doff their dire distresses."

One of these, had she not been slain, might have proved a second Joan of Arc. She was a young peasant-girl, who had hitherto lived a quiet, pious life; but her mind, overwrought by the horrors of the war, conceived an irresistible desire to take part in it. Throughout an engagement at Thouars, she kept close to Lescures, and fought like a heroine. She would not allow him to advance a step before her, exclaiming, when he attempted to do so, "No, General, you shall not get before me; I will always be closer to the enemy even than you." Early in the battle, she received a serious wound in the hand; but she treated it laughingly. Towards the end of the engagement, she became surrounded in a charge, and was killed, fighting desperately to the last.

About ten other women followed her example. A few concealed their sex beneath male attire; but others retained their proper costume. The most famous of these Amazons was a beautiful peasant-girl named Réné Bordereau, known in the army as L'Angevin. Having witnessed the massacre of her entire family by the Republicans, having seen her father slain before her eyes, she made a vow to devote the remainder of her existence to the destruction of the assassins. Dressed in soldier's costume, which well became her tall, masculine figure, none suspected her sex. With her horse's bridle between her teeth, a sword in one hand, and a pistol in the other, she would charge the enemy's squadron with the cool daring of an old soldier, and frequently leap from her saddle to fight on foot in the thickest of the fray. Another scarcely less famous heroine was a young girl of sixteen, named Lebein, who, dressed in her ordinary costume, fought

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beside her brother in every engagement. Both these Amazons survived the war, and settled down peacefully as mothers of families.

The officers did all they could to discourage this movement; but the mixture of the sexes was unattended by any corruption of morals. The lives of these women were as pure within the camp as they had been in their native villages.

No less heroic was the fortitude with which the mothers, wives, and sisters who remained at home endured the loss of their dear ones. There was not an engagement which did not call forth some touching incident like the following:—A certain peasant-girl who had a brother a cannoneer, after the attack upon Nantes hastened to find the officer of her parish, to inquire after his safety. A sad silence was the only response to her eager questions. "Ah, my poor Joseph!" she cried. Then, after a moment's pause, she added, in an anxious tone, "But at least he died bravely?" "Yes, yes, he died bravely, upon his cannon," answered the officer. "Ah, monsieur!" replied the girl, "since that is the case I will go to church and thank the good God."

Each succeeding picture of this fratricidal war now becomes darker and more terrible. Here is one which will serve as a specimen of many: Westermann had been beaten out of Châtillon, but, thinking to retake it by a *coup de main*, returned at midnight with a hundred grenadiers and as many hussars, and fell upon the peasants, who, with their usual negligence, had placed no outposts, and were lying scattered sleeping about the streets, worn out with fatigue, and many stupefied by brandy. A fearful conflict ensued; both sides fought like demons; but in the darkness it was almost impossible to distinguish friend from foe. Men hacked and fired at each other, wrestled and fell, others falling over their struggling bodies; numbers were thus trampled to death. The town was set on fire in fifty places, and was at length no longer tenable for either party. At dawn, the Vendéans found themselves to be masters of the situation.

But no amount of bravery and devotion on the part of these undisciplined peasants could make permanent head against the enormous forces of the Republic, which now numbered two hundred and forty thousand men. In an action at Tremblaye, Lescures was dangerously wounded. At a great battle fought near Chollet, Bonchamp was mortally wounded, and the insurgents were utterly defeated by the overwhelming masses of the enemy, and driven down to the banks of the Loire. The people on the opposite side brought them boats, calling out, "Come, friends! come to our country!—you shall want for nothing; we will help you; we are all Aristocrats!"

The following is a fine but terrible picture of what followed:—

"When, on the morning of the 18th, the officers arrived, the passage had begun. We had left Chaudron during the night. M. de Lescures was

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carried on a bed, which they had covered as well as they were able; he suffered dreadfully. I travelled by his side; I was *enciente;* my situation was shocking. We arrived early at St. Florent, and then I saw the greatest and saddest sight which can be imagined; a sight which can never be effaced from the memory of the wretched Vendéans. The heights of St. Florent form a kind of semicircular boundary to a vast level strand reaching to the Loire, which is very wide at this place. Eighty thousand people were crowded together in this valley—soldiers, women, children, the aged and the wounded—fleeing from inevitable destruction. Behind them they could see the smoke rising from their burning villages, fired by the Republicans. Nothing was heard but sobs, and groans, and cries. In this confused crowd every one sought his relations, his friends, his protectors. They knew not what fate they should meet on the other shore, yet hastened thither, as if beyond the stream they would find an end to all their misfortunes. Twenty crazy boats carried successively the fugitives who crowded in them; others tried to cross on horses; all spread out their arms towards the other side, supplicating to be taken there. At a distance on the opposite shore another multitude was seen and heard, but more faintly. In the middle was a small island covered with people. Many of us compared this disorder, this terrible despair, this uncertainty respecting the future, this immense spectacle, this bewildered crowd, this valley, this stream that must be crossed, to what we conceive of the Last Judgment."*

But even amid their despair, these poor creatures contrast most favourably with their foes. They had brought with them about five thousand prisoners. Finding it impossible to convey them farther, it was proposed that, to imitate Republican example, they should massacre them. But none could be found to execute the butchery, and so they released them to a man.

Henri de La Rochejacquelin was now elected commander-in-chief. "As soon as M. de Lescures knew they had followed his advice, he told me to call Henri," writes the Countess. "He had hidden himself away in a corner, and was weeping bitterly. I brought him; he threw his arms around M. de Lescures' neck, repeating that he was not worthy to be a general; that he only knew how to fight; that he was much too young, and that he should never know how to silence those who opposed him. He begged M. de Lescures to take the command again as soon as he should have recovered. 'I never expect it,' he answered; 'but if it does happen, I will be your aide-de-camp and help you to conquer that diffidence which prevents you acting up to the force of your own character.'" How admirably disinterested were all the leaders of this disastrous struggle!

The march was now continued, Lescures enduring intolerable agony from his wound, his wife suffering from absolute want. The condition of all was equally pitiable. Crowds of women carrying their children, old men supported by their sons, wounded men who could scarcely drag themselves along; soldiers, artillery,

* 'Memoirs of the Countess de La Rochejacquelin.' Chap. XIV.

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luggage, all moving confusedly together. Such was the spectacle presented by the roads along which they passed. At Laval, a battle was fought, in which they proved once more victorious, and in which the new commander-in-chief evinced a coolness and a capacity for generalship which could scarcely have been expected from one who had hitherto been so rash and headstrong. Soon afterwards, the noble Lescures succumbed to his wound. The sufferings of the unhappy wife may be imagined. After a series of disguises, adventures, sufferings, and hair-breadth escapes, which read like the inventions of Dumas, she succeeded in gaining a place of refuge, where she remained until the fall of the Terror assured her safety.

In the meanwhile the retreat still continued, dogged by the Republicans. Winter was now upon them, and cold and rain to aggravate their other sufferings. There was continual skirmishing, carried on with the most horrible ferocity on both sides; but the Vendéans were fast losing their courage and enthusiasm, and at times dared not face their enemies, although the officers used every means to revive their drooping spirits; yet the old ardour was not dead in all; women stopped the runaways, struck them, and barred their passage; one, a *femme de chambre*, seized a musket, sprang upon a horse, and endeavoured to reanimate them by shouting, "Forward, women of Poitou!" and for the first time the priests led them to battle, crucifix in hand.* This was at Dol; and after a tremendous fight in the darkness of the night, in which the two parties grappled hand to hand and literally tore each other to pieces, the Blues retreated.

Yet amidst all these miseries, their old virtues were not wholly extinguished in the Vendéans' breasts: thanks to the priests, they frequently spared the lives of their prisoners; and, when discouraged by the fortified appearance of Angers, their officers promised them the pillage of the town, an act which had hitherto been forbidden, they answered, "God would abandon us if we allowed ourselves to do such a thing." That it had not been done in the heat of battle cannot be asserted, but the greater part of these men would not listen to such a proposition made in cold blood. Angers was not attacked, and the last hope of regaining their homes was thus lost.

At Mans, they suffered a terrible defeat, and fifteen thousand of their number were killed, the greater part massacred by the Republicans after the fight was over. After many more miles of weary marching, ten thousand sad survivors once more reached the banks of the Loire. They found the shore clear of the enemy, and on the

* The Countess positively asserts, and there is no reason to doubt the assertion, that previous to this time the priests never appeared upon the battle-field save to confess the dying and tend the wounded; that they never sought to stimulate the evil passions of the peasantry, but, on the contrary, did all in their power to prevent slaughter.

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opposite side four large boats loaded with hay; these La Rochejacquelin resolved to seize and use for the transport of his people; he sprang into the one boat they possessed, and, accompanied by eighteen soldiers, made the passage; but scarcely had they reached the other side, when they were surprised by a Republican patrol and obliged to flee for their lives. The Vendéans who waited so anxiously on the opposite shore never again beheld their gallant leader.

For several days he and a few companions wandered about the desolated country. At last they took refuge in a barn and fell fast asleep; they were aroused by the news that a party of Republicans was close at hand, but they were too worn out to attempt to escape; fortunately, the intruders were as weary as they, and threw themselves down upon the straw, and soon both parties were slumbering peacefully side by side.

At Châtillon and Chollet, the peasants flocked about him without invitation, and, finding himself at the head of a small force which continued to increase, he again commenced operations against the Blues. On the 4th of March, 1794, he attacked Trémentine-sur-Noaillé and gained a slight advantage. After the fight was over, Henri saw his soldiers about to kill two grenadiers whom they had taken prisoners. "No, no," he said; "I will speak to them." And running forward cried out, "Surrender, and you shall have your lives!" Upon which one of the villains turned and fired upon him and shot him dead. The assassin was instantly cut down, but, the enemy's column approaching, they dug a grave and buried the murdered and the murderer side by side. And so he fell, a victim to his own generous heart.

"Thus perished, at twenty-one, Henri de La Rochejacquelin," writes his biographer. "To this day the peasants speak with love and pride of his great courage, his modesty, his affability; that easy, careless good-humour which distinguished him. There is not a Vendéan whose countenance does not brighten when he tells that he served under Monsieur Henri, for by that simple title he was always called in the army."

Of the other leaders, not one survived. M. d'Elbée was discovered by the Republicans helplessly wounded. After loading him with insults, they placed him in a chair—he could not stand—and so shot him. No pity or generosity for fallen bravery ever entered the hearts of those bloodthirsty revolutionists. Charette, perhaps intellectually the greatest of the chiefs, but cast in a sterner mould than Henri or Lescures, was captured and executed, shouting "Vive le Roi!" with his last breath.

The cruelties executed by Carrier and his associates upon the vanquished Vendéans at Nantes and elsewhere are too revolting to be dwelt upon. Women and children were thrust into ovens and baked

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alive, crowded into barges and sunk in the middle of the river; infants were stuck upon the soldiers' bayonets or roasted in their cradles; females violated and then murdered upon the very altars of the churches, while their murderers, desirous of immortalising their own infamy, engraved, with their sword-points, the record of the crime upon the blood-stained stones. Not until the fall of Robespierre did these horrors cease.

The motives and objects of the Vendéan war are unique in the history of the world. Here we have a peasant rising, not to redress peasant wrongs and grievances, but to maintain religion and kingly government; and this rising was a purely spontaneous action, neither originated nor suggested by the nobles; for, as we have seen, Cathelineau, the peasant, was the first leader, and the Aristocrats kept aloof, scarcely knowing what was going on, until invited to take the command. Neither throughout the struggle did they monopolise authority, which was equally divided among themselves and the peasant chiefs. And so, amidst atrocities which cannot be surpassed in the annals of Timour and Tamerlane, they sacrificed their blood, their homes, their wives and children—for what? To what great rewards and benefits did they look forward to compensate them for all their sufferings? None. All they desired from victory was to re-establish their religion and to place the king upon his throne again; after which they hoped that he would one day honour their country with his presence; that the Bocage should be formed into a separate province with a distinct administration, and be henceforth called La Vendée; that in memory of the war a white flag might be always hoisted on the steeple of each church, and that a corps of Vendéans might be admitted into the king's guards! Some of the leaders were equally moderate in their desires. "If we re-establish the king upon his throne, he will grant me a regiment of hussars," said Henri. Such disinterestedness reads more like romance than sober facts.

"History," remarks a writer in the 'Quarterly Review,' "ancient and modern, might be ransacked without finding parallels to so many instances of high daring, patient suffering, and cheerful self-sacrifice. Above all Greek, above all Roman praise, the finer spirit and purer motives of modern chivalry may be seen blended with the stern resolve and stoical contempt of life which distinguished the heroes of antiquity. Cato and Brutus look like vulgar suicides; and the dying Bayard, leaning against the tree, with his cross-hilted sword held up before him as a crucifix, or even Sidney, on the fatal field of Zutphen, still wants *the cause* to raise him above the martyrs of La Vendée."

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Ralph Wilton's Weird.

Chapter I.

The yellow sunlight of a crisp October day was lighting up the faded though rich hangings, and the abundant but somewhat blackened gilding of a large study or morning room in one of the stately mansions of Mayfair, nearly fifteen years ago.

Bookcases and bureaux, writing-tables, and reading-tables more or less convenient, easy chairs, print stands furnished with well-filled portfolios, pictures, bronzes, all the signs and tokens of wealth, were there, but nothing new. An impress of extinct vitality was stamped upon the chamber and all it contained. The very fire burned with a dull continuous glow, neither flaming nor crackling.

On one side of this fire, his back to the light, in a high leathern chair, sat an old man. Originally slight in frame, he now looked attenuated. His blue brass-buttoned coat, though evidently from the hands of an artist, hung loosely upon him. His thin grey hair was carelessly brushed back from a brow, not high, but peculiarly wide, a straight refined nose, a square-cut chin, a thin-lipped slightly cruel mouth, a tint of the deadliest pallor—all these combined to make his countenance at once attractive and repellent. There was a certain dignity in his attitude as he leant against the side of the large chair in which he was almost lost, one thin small white hand resting on the arm of his seat, the other playing, in a manner evidently habitual, with a couple of seals, hanging in bygone fashion from a black ribbon.

He was gazing at the fire, and listening to a meek-looking semi-genteel young man, who, seated at a table with a neatly folded packet of papers before him, was reading aloud from a letter. But the lecture was interrupted.

The door was thrown open by an archdeaconal butler, who announced in a suppressed voice and impressive manner, "Colonel Wilton, my lord."

Whereupon entered a soldierly-looking man above middle height, his broad shoulders and compact waist, duly displayed by an incomparably fitting frock coat, closely buttoned, and worn with the indescribable carriage that life-long assured position and habitual command only can bestow. A bold, sunburnt, and somewhat aquiline face, a pair of eagle-like brown eyes, and plenty of red-brown wavy hair, whisker and mustache, entitled the possessor to be termed by partial comrades "a good-looking fellow."

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The old nobleman stood up, and raising his cold, steely, keen blue eyes, with an extension of his thin lips intended for a smile, held out his slight fine hand.

"I am glad to see Colonel Wilton," he said, in a low sweet voice, which must have been peculiarly charming before age had thinned its tones. "You may leave us, Mr. Robbins," he added; whereupon the young man at the writing-table took up his papers and departed. "I am obliged to you," continued Lord St. George, "for obeying my summons so promptly; it was more than I expected, considering how often you must have been in town without calling upon your recluse kinsman."

"My dear lord," said Colonel Wilton, with a frank smile, taking the chair placed for him, "I never thought a visit from me would be acceptable. I supposed that I must excite the natural aversion which is generally felt for junior and unendowed relatives, so I kept out of the way." Colonel Wilton's voice was not unlike his host's, though deeper and richer.

"Unendowed or not, you are almost the only relative who has never asked me a favour," returned the old man.

"Had I wanted anything I suppose I should have asked for it," said Colonel Wilton, good humouredly; "but my ambition is professional, and fortune has favoured me beyond my deserts."

"You are a young colonel."

"Only brevet."

"Ay, I remember; you got your first step after that affair of the rifle pits."

"Exactly; then I volunteered for our second battalion when the Mutiny broke out, saw a good deal of very unpleasant service, was slightly hit, got fever, more from fatigue than wounds, was ordered home on sick leave and found my brevet awaiting me. I have just returned from the German baths—and now, my lord, I am at your service."

"You want to know why I sent for you—you shall hear presently;" the old man paused abruptly. "You are like, and yet unlike your father," he resumed; "you know, I suppose, that although but first cousins we might have been brothers, we hated each other so well?"

"I have heard something of it," returned Wilton, coolly, though the smiling frank expression passed from his face; "but I have lived so much among strangers that I am lamentably ignorant of the family hatreds."

Lord St. George looked up, and played more rapidly with his seals.

"I have been a broken man for many years," he resumed, after a short pause, "and latterly a complete recluse. Men are such

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knaves, and life is such a round of folly, amusement and ambition, and "lofty aspirations," as modern scribblers have it, such dust and ashes, that I can with unusual truth say, I am weary! I dare say you are wondering why I inflict this Jeremiad upon you. I hardly know myself; however, it is finished. I suppose you are aware that a very small portion of my property is attached to the title of St. George?"

Colonel Wilton bowed, and listened with increasing interest. "My Worzelshire estates and Welsh mines," continued the old lord, "came to me through my mother, and are mine to dispose of as I choose. A ruined tower and some worthless moorland is all that will come by right to you. It is in my power to make you that most wretched of failures—a poor nobleman, or to bequeath you means to ruffle it with the best."

"You must do as seems best in your eyes," said Colonel Wilton, with the same good-humoured well-bred independence which had characterised his manner all through the interview, when the peer stopped, as if for a reply.

"I am by no means inclined to separate my property from my title—but it is all in my own hands—I have no claims upon me—no nearer relative than yourself. All that I have heard of you is tolerably creditable to the family name, and I am inclined to give you the means to keep up the old title. There is one point, however, on which I should like you to understand and conform to my wishes. You are, of course, aware of the circumstance which has blighted my life—the latter half it?"

Although it seemed impossible that any living cheek could be paler than Lord St. George's, it grew a shade more ghastly as he spoke.

"Yes, yes!" returned Colonel Wilton, with a sort of quick sympathy. "Do not if possible distress yourself by alluding to it."

"I must, Ralph—I must!" It was the first time the viscount had called him by his name; and he continued, in a firm but low voice: "When my daughter—my only child!—flung herself into an abyss of infamy, by her disgraceful marriage, I at once and for ever renounced her. Now, I only care that the inheritors of my name and property may at least be free from the taint of inferior race. Promise me you will marry a gentlewoman—a girl of some unblemished family, which, though they are few, can still be found—promise me this, and I will leave you all I possess."

"My dear lord, it is not necessary to promise. Poor as I am, I should never dream of marrying a plebeian; but I would rather not marry for some years to come. I am little more than thirty; you must really leave me a longer spell of liberty."

"All young men are alike," returned Lord St. George. "You put

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off the evil day, until you are too old to see your children grow up, or to guide them, or be anything but a semi-living mummy, fit only to sign cheques for other people to expend. Be ruled by me; accept my conditions, quit the army, spend the coming season among the best country-houses, pick out a suitable wife—as my heir, you *can* choose—go into Parliament—a Crimean man will be well received by country constituencies—and you will be well before the world by the time I make way for you. I say nothing," added the old peer, with an air of courtly humility, "of the satisfaction such a course would afford me personally. I have no claim of that description to urge upon you."

"Your present intentions constitute a tolerable strong claim," replied Wilton, smiling. "At any rate, I should be very happy to please you; and I heartily wish you could will away your title as well as your estates. However, on the subject of marriage I can make *no* promise; at present, the mere fact of being tied seems to me to outweigh all other advantages. I hope my bluntness does not offend you. I should be sorry to do so. You see, there is a strong dash of the Bohemian in my nature, though I am not without ambition; and I am quite aware that a penniless peer is a most unfortunate devil. Still, I cannot make up my mind to matrimony. Nevertheless, apart from promises, I do not think any man can be more averse to the idea of marrying out of his own class than I am."

There was a moment's pause, Lord St. George looking keenly at his companion.

"I do not think you seem likely to commit so egregious an error; but it is impossible to rely on the prudence or common sense of any man; though you are certainly almost past the age when men will sacrifice much for women. So I must be content with probabilities."

Another short pause, during which Colonel Wilton took up his hat, which he had laid on the carpet beside him.

"Stay!" said the old peer. "It is long since I have endured to see any of my own people, and the effort cost me something. Now you are here, tell me, where are your sisters, your brother?"

"My brother—poor fellow! he died of fever before he left college. My sisters are both married, the eldest to General Ogilvie—he is in command at Montreal—and Gertrude to the Dean of ——."

"I remember hearing of the first marriage," returned Lord St. George. "I was then in Greece." He continued to ask for various persons, respecting very few of whom Colonel Wilton could give any information. Meantime the light was fading and Lord St. George's visitor growing somewhat impatient.

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"You must forgive me, my lord, if I bid you good morning. But when I received your message I had arranged to run down to Scotland to-night, for some grouse-shooting, and I am to dine early with an old brother officer before starting."

"Then I must not detain you," replied Lord St. George, reluctantly. "I am glad I have seen you. I feel a little more satisfied about the future of my name and possessions. I wish you could meet my wishes completely. I am singularly without near relatives—singularly free from claims of any kind."

Colonel Wilton had stood up as if in the act to go; he hesitated an instant, as his kinsman paused, and said, in a lower tone:

"I presume, then, my cousin—your daughter—left no children?"

"Do not dare to name her, sir!" cried the old man fiercely, and grasping the arms of his chair with nervous, twitching fingers. "She has long since ceased to live for me! She—the first woman in a long unbroken line that ever brought disgrace upon her name! Living or dead, I refuse all intelligence concerning her. Her children may exist, or not; the poorest beggar that crawls in the street is more to me!"

"You have, certainly, a cruel disappointment to complain of, my lord," said Wilton, gravely and firmly. "But the children would be sinless. You would not, I am sure, leave them to suffer poverty and"——

"I would—I would! I would stamp out the spawn of such a viper! There—there, leave me. I believe you are an honest gentleman; but this subject you must never touch again. Good morning, Ralph! Let me see you on your return from the north."

Colonel Wilton promised he would call, and, pressing the thin wan hand extended to him, left the room.

About two hours later a couple of gentlemen sat at dinner in a private room in Morley's Hotel. The cheese period had been reached, and the sharp edge of appetite blunted. One, who seemed the host, was Ralph Wilton; the guest was a tall, rugged-looking, bony man, with shaggy eyebrows and a large hooked nose slightly bent to one side, small, sharp, dark-grey eyes, grizzled black hair, and a wide mouth with a strong projecting under-jaw. This does not sound like manly beauty, yet Major Moncrief was not a bad-looking man.

"And when do you intend to join me, Moncrief?" said Colonel Wilton.

"Not later than this day week."

"I hope not. For I have no fancy for being alone in my glory."

The conversation flowed somewhat intermittently until the waiter, placing wine and olives on the table, left the friends alone.

"Help yourself," said Colonel Wilton, pushing the claret towards

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Major Moncrief. "Do you know, I have had an interview with that curious old hermit, Lord St. George, to-day?"

"Indeed! How did that come about?"

"I found a note from him at the Club this morning, inviting me, very politely, to call any day after three. So, as I hope not to see London again for some months, I went at once."

"You are his heir, are you not?"

"To his barren title—yes; but he can will away his wealth as he likes. Poor old fellow! He had an only child, a lovely girl, I believe, and, after refusing some of the best matches in England, she ran off with an artist fellow, who played the fiddle, or sang divinely, and the viscount never forgave her. I only know the general gossip, but I have been told she died in frightful poverty. I ventured to say a word in favour of the possible and probable children, and was soon pulled up for my pains. How idiotic women are, and yet how keen and hard at times! This cousin of mine was not so very young either; she must have been four and twenty."

"Women are quite incomprehensible," ejaculated Moncrief.

Colonel Wilton laughed.

"Well, old St. George, it seems, sent for me to induce me to marry some 'Clara Vere de Vere,' in order to secure the sacred title and acres from falling into the hands of a half-bred inheritor. However, though I would not acknowledge his suzerainty by giving him the promise he wanted, he may be tolerably sure I would never marry a second-rate woman. I do not mean to say I care for rank, but good blood is essential."

"I do not fancy you are much of a marrying man."

"No! not at present. I shall come to it some day. I have been too busy to have had an attack of the love-fever for a long time."

"You were badly hit in that affair with Lady Mary," observed Moncrief.

"Well—yes! But I made a rapid recovery. Then, matrimony would be a different matter. In short, if Lord St. George will just give me a year or two more of liberty, I dare say I shall be ready to present him with a bride of the desired pattern. I really have no democratic proclivities."

"Ah ha, lad!" said Moncrief, in his unmistakable Scotch tones, "you must just 'dree your weird.'"

"So must every one," returned Wilton, rising to fill his cigar-case from a box that stood upon the sideboard. "But I think I have survived the spooney period, and have sown my wild oats—not that I have had more than a mere handful to dispose of. On the whole I have been a pattern man—eh, old fellow?"

"Hum! There have been more extensive crops," returned the Major, doubtfully. "Still, do not be too sure of yourself."

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"Oh! I am safe enough. And, besides," he continued, returning to the table and filling his glass, "I am very particularly anxious that Lord St. George should leave me something wherewith to regild the faded honours of his ancient peerage. I confess to a mortal dread of being a poor peer. If my old kinsman does not leave me his property, I will never adopt the title, but be plain 'Ralph Wilton' to the end of the chapter."

"You might do worse," said Moncrief drily. "As I said before, you must 'dree your weird.'"

"Hullo!" cried Wilton suddenly; "half-past seven, by Jove! I shall have a close shave to catch the train!" He rang the bell, ordered a cab; hastily donning his overcoat and thrusting his cigar-case into the breast pocket, he shook hands heartily with his friend: "Good-bye, old fellow; come as soon as you can, and let the moorland breeze sweep the cobwebs from your brain. You are too solemn by half for so good a comrade—good-bye."

It was a very close shave, but Ralph Wilton was just in time. The bell had rung before he had taken his ticket after seeing a favourite pointer properly disposed of. "Here you are, sir," cried a porter, opening the door of a carriage. Wilton jumped in and the door was slammed. "Stop! I say, porter," he shouted as he glanced at the only other occupant, thinking to himself, "An unprotected female! this is too formidable!" But his voice was drowned in the loud panting of the engine, and they were off. "It cannot be helped," he thought, and set about arranging himself as comfortably as he could.

His companion was a young lady, he perceived as his eyes became accustomed to the lamp light. She was in black, and rather thinly clad for a night journey. Her bonnet lay in the netting overhead, and a blue scarf was loosely tied over her head and ears. She seemed already asleep, though Wilton was dimly aware that she had opened a pair of large dark eyes to look at him. She was a serious drawback to the comfort of his journey. But for her, he could make a bed of the cushions and stretch himself at full length—but for her, he could solace himself with unlimited cigars and enjoy the freedom of loneliness. Thinking thus, he stooped forward to take up an evening paper he had snatched at the last moment, and his cigar-case fell from his pocket. His obnoxious fellow-traveller opened her eyes. "If you smoke," she said, "do not mind me; it may help me to sleep." With a slight shiver she closed her eyes again, apparently without hearing Wilton's thanks; while his unspoken maledictions on the ill chance that placed her in the same carriage were, in some mysterious way, silenced and arrested by the charm of a soft sweet voice, delicate yet full, with a certain sadness in its tones, and an accent not quite English. "A gentlewoman, I imagine," thought Wilton, as he moved

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from his place to the centre seat opposite her to be nearer the light. There was something touching in the child-like abandonment of her attitude; her head lay back in the angle of the division she occupied; her face was very pale, and a dark shade under the eyes bespoke fatigue. Long black lashes fringed her closed lids, curling back at the ends, and all of colour was concentrated in her delicately-curved lips. Ralph Wilton could not help glancing from his paper to her face and forming conjectures respecting her. Why did her people let so fair, so young a creature wander about by herself? But he was by no means old enough to adopt a fatherly view of so pretty a subject. She must be seventeen or eighteen—here his companion murmured in her sleep and sighed deeply; while Wilton, with a sudden access of chivalrous modesty, reproaching himself for presuming upon her unconsciousness to scan so closely the tender child-like face that lay hushed before him, withdrew to his original position. Here he tried to read, but the face and figure of the old recluse nobleman flitted between him and his paper, and the bitter sweet of his tones sounded again in his ears—what depths of disappointment and mortification that old man must have fathomed! Well, worse endings might have come about than the union of Lord St. George's title and property in his (Ralph Wilton's) favour, and if he ever inherited these good things he would certainly look up his erring cousin's children; these meditations were varied by sundry glances at his companion, vague conjectures concerning her. How soft and gentle her mouth looked! yet there was a good deal of power in the wide smooth forehead and delicately but clearly-marked dark brown eyebrows. As Wilton looked he perceived her shiver, without waking, and make a sleepy effort to fold her shawl closer. The night was growing colder, and Wilton observing a small portion of the window next his companion open, rose to shut it. In moving to accomplish this he touched the slumberer's foot. She opened her eyes with a sleepy, startled look. Great dark lustrous eyes, which seemed suddenly to banish the child-like expression of her face.

"I beg your pardon," said Colonel Wilton. "But it is cold, and I thought you would like the window shut."

"Oh! yes, thank you! it is very, very cold." She sat up and rubbed her hands together; tying the blue scarf closer round her head, and thrusting carelessly under it a heavy tress of very dark brown hair that had become loosened, with utter disregard of appearances, as if only desirous of rest. "I am so, so weary," she went on, "and I dream instead of sleeping."

"That is probably because of your uneasy position," said Wilton. "If you will allow me to arrange the cushions for you, I think you may rest better—I am an old traveller."

"You are very good," she returned, hesitatingly; "how do you mean?"

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"I will show you;" and he proceeded to make supports for one of the unoccupied cushions with a walking-stick and umbrella so as to form a couch, and then rolled up his plaid loosely for an impromptu pillow. "Now," he said, with frank good-nature, "you can rest really; and if you will wrap yourself in my cloak, I dare say you will soon forget you are in a railway carriage."

"Thank you very much," she replied. "How good of you to take so much trouble—and your plaid, too! You have left yourself nothing!"

"Oh, I do not need anything! Take the cloak, and I wish you good-night.

He checked an inclination to wrap it round her, lest she might think him too officious; and smiling at the change in his own sentiments towards his fellow-traveller, withdrew to his original position.

"At least you can smoke," said she, as she placed herself upon the couch he had improvised. "I really like the perfume of a cigar."

Thus encouraged, Wilton drew forth his cigar-case and comforted himself with a weed, while he had the satisfaction of observing the perfect stillness of the rather shapeless mass of drapery made by his heavy cloak round the slender form slumbering beneath it. So they sped on into the night. Wilton's cigar was finished; he threw the end from the window. Gazing a moment at the dim, uncanny trees and hedges as they flew past with ghastly rapidity, and settling himself in his corner, he too tried to sleep, for a long time in vain. The past—the possible future—the absolute present—his sudden interest in his companion, crowded and jostled each other in his thoughts, but gradually all became indistinct, and at last he slept.

Uneasily, though, visions of struggles—of men and horses dying—of a desperate necessity to carry an order from the general to a remote division, and the utter impossibility of getting his horse to move. Dreams like these distracted him; at last a heavy battery on his left opened fire, and he woke.

Woke, suddenly, completely, with a feeling that the end of everything was at hand. A noise of tearing and crashing filled his ears, mingled with shrieks and yells; the carriage heaved violently, first to one side, and then to the other, in which position it remained.

As Wilton sprang to his feet, his fellow-traveller started quickly to hers, and grasping his arm, exclaimed, with a certain despairing calm that struck him even in such a moment, "Is it—is it death?" He did not reply, but holding on by the bar which supports the netting over the seats, he managed to open the door next him. It was on the upheaved side, and he found a heap of clay jammed under the step of the carriage.

"Come," he exclaimed, "give me your hand!—lean on my shoulder—there is an open space beyond here." His fellow-traveller obeyed,

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silently and steadily. Instinctively Wilton groped his way across what seemed a truck laden with earth and stones, and assisted his companion down the opposite side on to the grass-grown border of the line, which was open, and only fenced by a low bank and hedge. Placing her in safety, he turned to look at the scene of fear and confusion. A few yards ahead lay the massive fragments of the two engines heaped together, the foremost carriage smashed to pieces, and already blazing, having caught light from the guard's lamp, which had been overturned. Two other carriages, more or less injured, were, like the one he had just quitted, forced upon trucks laden with stones and clay. The passengers were scrambling over them, the women screaming, the men shouting directions and questions. "If you will stay here, I will go and see if I can be of any use," exclaimed Wilton. "You are quite safe, and I will return as soon as I can."

She murmured something in reply as he went forward.

Wilton found an indescribable scene of confusion when he came up to the overturned engine. The male passengers and some twenty navvies who had been with the ballast train were trying frantically to separate the burning carriages from the others, by forcing them back; but, although the coupling irons were broken, the foremost carriages had been so violently dashed against the trucks, that they had become too closely entangled to be stirred, and it seemed highly probable that the whole train would be consumed before any means could be devised for extinguishing the flames. Wilton's quick eye took in the difficulty in a moment, and noticed that the blazing van, having been the first to encounter the shock, had fallen on the side away from the ballast train, breaking the couplings and everything breakable as it crashed over. The next carriage had been forced upon the second truck, and the others more or less upon those nearest them, as they were farther from the actual collision. The unhappy guard had been dragged senseless from the débris; there was therefore no one to direct the willing but fruitless efforts of the volunteers. Seeing this, Wilton sprang upon the truck nearest him, and shouted, in clear, ringing tones, "Hold, men!—you will never move that wreck! Your only chance to put out the flames is to smother it with the damp clay here. Get your shovels and picks—some of you jump up with the picks and loosen the stuff—another party be ready with the shovels to pile the clay over the fire."

At the first sound of authoritative direction the men sprang to obey, and Wilton took as supreme command as if a party of his own pioneers were at his orders. The men worked with a will, as men generally do when intelligently and energetically commanded. It was a wild and not unpicturesque scene. At first the flames from the dry varnished wood streamed out upon the breeze, which, fortunately, was not high, though it sometimes sent wreaths of smoke and fire

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against the men who were toiling to extinguish it, and bringing out in strong relief the figure of Wilton, who had climbed upon the side of the carriage nearest the burning fragments, and, holding on with one hand, urged the working party with quick, commanding gestures. By the time the truck had been half emptied the fire was evidently arrested. Every now and then a jet of flame shot up to the sky—a few more minutes of fierce exertion and the enemy was got under, and Wilton descended from his post of observation to find a new authority on the scene, who was bustling about very actively. This was the master of a small station about half a mile farther up the line, scarcely to be seen from the fast and express trains, which never stopped there, but elevated by the present catastrophe into importance and authority. By his directions the guard and stoker, who were most injured, were removed to a small town at a little distance, where medical aid could be procured. Having discovered and liberated his yelping dog, Wilton sought what information he could from this official.

"No, sir; there ain't much damage done. The stoker of the ballast train is hurt a good deal; but the guard is more stunned than hurt. No lives lost, thank God—only some bruises and a broken head. You see, it's getting late for night travelling, and there wasn't a soul in the first carriage. How did it happen? You see, this ballast train was shunted here to wait till yours was past; but those pointsmen are overworked, and this here forgot to set back the points; so, you see, you ran right into the other engine," &c. &c.

After mixing with the other passengers, and ascertaining what they intended to do, or if he could be of any use to them, Wilton bethought him of his lonely little travelling companion, and returned to seek her. She had advanced nearer the scene of action, and climbed up the low bank which here bordered the line, the better to see what was going on.

"I am afraid you must think I was not coming back," said Wilton, offering his hand to help her down.

"I saw you were well occupied," she said, touching it lightly as she descended.

"By Jove! you are shivering with cold—and no wonder—without a cloak or plaid! Wait for a moment, and I will bring you mine from our carriage."

"Would you also be so kind as to bring my bonnet and a small travelling-bag? I should have gone for them myself, only I could hardly stand."

But Wilton was gone, and returned quickly. "There are but three other ladies," he said, assisting to wrap his plaid round her, "and they are going up to a small town or village about two miles off, to rest at the inn; and, when they are refreshed, intend posting on to their

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destination, which is somewhere in this district. Would you like to go with them? or wait at a little station close to this, where a fresh train will be sent as soon as they can clear the line?"

"Oh, I will go to the station. I am anxious to get on as soon as possible."

"And so am I. I shall, therefore, remain there also, and shall be most happy to be of any use to you."

"Thank you! Can I walk to this station at once?"

"Certainly, if you will take my arm."

"I feel I must, to steady myself," she replied. "I did not know I was so much frightened and shaken. I feel ashamed."

They walked on in silence for a few yards, and then Wilton asked if she was going much farther.

"Yes," with a sigh, "a long way—over the Border to a place called Monkscleugh."

"Indeed!" cried Wilton; "that is my destination also."

She made no reply, and they accomplished the short distance in silence, save for a few friendly remarks and inquiries from Wilton. The station was almost deserted when they reached it; but the gas-light and a good fire were very welcome; and the station-master soon returned with the intelligence that they had collected more men, who were working hard to clear the line, and that as soon as it was passable a fresh train would be sent on from A——.

The station-master was a short man—broad, without being stout—with a peculiarly weatherbeaten aspect, his mouth screwed to one side, and one eye squeezed down to the other, as if in the habit of facing the sun's glare without adequate shelter. He spoke, too, in a staccato style, as if some intermittent power pumped up his words.

"I dare say this lady would be glad of a cup of tea or—something," said Wilton, looking compassionately at the figure of his companion, who had drawn a chair to the fire, and sat down wearily, putting a small well-booted foot upon the fender.

"I have sent up to the village for refreshments, sir; but I am sorry to say I have nothing in the place. I generally go away for my meals." So saying, the station-master hurried off.

"I do not feel to want anything but sleep," said the lady. "I have not had any for many nights, and I am scarce awake now. If I could but close my eyes, and rest."

She raised them as she spoke to Wilton—such large black-blue eyes, so heavy with fatigue, that his compassion for her evident exhaustion was naturally increased by the admiration they excited.

"You really ought to take something, if we could get it," he said. "Such a shock must have been too much for you, though you showed remarkable pluck."

"Yet I was dreadfully frightened," she replied, clasping her hands

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over one knee, and gazing dreamily into the fire. "I do not fear death so much as being hurt and helpless."

"Well," said Wilton cheerfully, "we must find a resting-place for you. There ought to be a lady's waiting-room even here." He rose and looked about as he spoke. "And so there is"—he opened a door on the right of the fireplace—"a very desolate-looking chamber. Still there is an uneasy-looking stuffed bench, and perhaps, with my cloak and plaid, you might manage to get an hour's sleep while we are waiting."

"How good of you to think of all this!" she exclaimed, looking at him more attentively than she had yet done. "But it is dark—and see! the lock is broken. I do not think I should like to sleep with an open door."

"Let me light the gas," said Wilton, turning the stiff tap and striking one of his fusees. "Now the only objection is the broken lock. I will mount guard outside, and trust me, no one shall intrude upon you! What do you say?"

"Many, many thanks. I will gladly lie down and try to sleep. Are *you* not weary?"

"Not in the least. I would advise your trying to compose yourself at once; the others will be here soon, and will probably talk and make a row. By the way," interrupting himself, "would you like to telegraph to your friends that you are all right? I am going to do so myself."

"Telegraph to my friends?" she replied, stopping and looking full at him, her large dark dewy eyes lighting up as a half-sad, half-scornful smile dimpled her cheek. "It is not at all necessary; they will not distress themselves."

She bent her head as Wilton held the door for her to pass through. Closing it after her, he returned to his seat by the fire wondering at himself; for, though far too manly a man to adopt a tone of selfish indifference towards others, though he would have shown kindly consideration to a plain or an elderly woman in such circumstances, he was conscious of an extraordinary degree of interest and admiration for his quiet undemonstrative fellow-traveller. She was so gentle, yet so indifferent, so simple and so self-possessed; evidently grateful to him for his attentions, and yet utterly regardless of him as a "good-looking fellow," or as anything save a civil travelling companion. There was something marvellously attractive in the almost infantine sweetness of her mouth and delicate chin, and the contrast of her earnest expressive eyes.

"Who can she be?" asked Wilton of himself; "though quite unconventional there is a high tone about her, poor little thing! It is as well she fell in with such a steady fellow as myself. I must see her safe to the end of her journey and find out all about her before we part."

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His reflections were interrupted by an influx of some of the passengers, who now began to collect, having impeded the efforts of the railway officials as much as possible by their attempts to afford assistance; they were all exceedingly talkative and hungry, not to say hilarious, from the reaction of their escape. The refreshments which had been sent for had now arrived, and the little station looked quite crowded. In the midst of the buzz of voices, while all except Wilton were gathered round the table discussing the viands placed thereon, he observed the door of the ladies' room open gently and his protégée appear, his cloak over one shoulder and trailing behind. Wilton immediately went towards her.

"I cannot sleep," she said; "I dozed a little just at first, but now I am quite awake and restless."

"That's bad," returned Wilton. "Will you come in here and sit by the fire?"

"Oh no!" shrinking back, "not amongst all those people."

"Well, it would not be very pleasant; but shall you not be very cold?"

"Not if you will still allow me to have your cloak."

"Certainly; and I hope we shall not be kept much longer. Could we not get you a fire here?" and he walked in unceremoniously.

"I do not think even you could manage that," she returned with a quiet smile, as she placed herself at a table under the gaslight and opened a large note-book as if about to make some entries.

"Not a strong-minded female taking notes, I hope," thought Wilton. "She is far too pretty for that."

"No," said he, aloud, as he observed there was no fireplace. "With all the will imaginable, I cannot manage a fire; but can I do nothing more? I must insist on your taking some wine or tea. They are all devouring out there; and I have had some very tolerable brandy-and-water myself," and Wilton beckoned a waiter to bring some refreshment.

"I tell you what you could do for me," said the young lady, suddenly looking up more brightly than she had yet done; "make the station-master come in here and talk—ask him questions. Oh, you know what I mean!" she went on with a sort of graceful petulance as Wilton looked at her in no small surprise: "anything to make him talk. There, I think I hear him in the next room; please to watch for him and bring him here. I will begin, you can follow me; when I say 'Thank you,' send him away—there, pray catch him."

Wilton, greatly wondering that the first signs of animation in his interesting companion should be aroused by so rugged and commonplace a subject, hastened to obey, and soon returned with the functionary.

"Oh!" said the lady, bending her head with such a proud

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yet gracious air that the man involuntarily removed his hat. "Pray tell me is there really no serious injury? I should be more satisfied were I assured by you."

"Well, mum, I am happy to say there is no one much hurt to speak of," &c. &c.

"Is it long since you have had an accident before?" asked Wilton, not very well knowing how to proceed in compliance with a little private imperative nod from the fair inquisitor.

The question was opportune, for it launched the station-master upon quite a flood of memories into which he rushed and talked for good ten minutes without intermission. How long he would have continued it is impossible to say, but one of the porters came to call him, as there was a telegraph from ——.

Wilton followed to hear the news, and returned, after a short absence, with the intelligence that the expected train would not arrive for another hour.

"That is long," replied the young lady, scarce lifting her head; then as Wilton, a little mortified by her tone, turned to leave the room she exclaimed, still looking down, "Stay one moment, if not inconvenient."

"Certainly," and Wilton stood still for another minute or two.

"There," she said, holding out the book, "is that like him?"

Wilton took it and uttered an exclamation of surprise. On the page before him was a bold, rapid, admirable sketch of the station-master; all the characteristic lines and puckers were there, but slightly idealised.

"This is first-rate! You are quite an artist."

"I wish I was! Let me touch it a little more. What a capital face it is—so rugged, so humorous—yet so English; not the least bit picturesque. I shall work this into something some day."

"Then I am right in supposing you an artist? May I look again?" said Wilton, sitting down beside her.

"Oh yes; you may look at my scratchings. This is my note-book. I like to draw everything—but, you see, most imperfectly."

"I do not, indeed. I know very little of art, though I can sketch roughly—merely professional work—but you seem to me to have both genius and skill."

"Some taste, scarce any skill." There was something quite genuine in her tone—not the least tinge of mock-modesty—as she turned over the pages, and touched them here and there, while her manner was singularly devoid of coquetry. Wilton might have been her grandfather for all of embarrassment or excitement his attentions caused. "And you can draw; perhaps you know these trees; they are not far from Monkscleugh." She showed him a group of beeches most delicately yet clearly drawn.

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"I do not know the neighbourhood. I am going there for the first time. May I ask if you reside there?"

"Yes, at present. Oh, you will find a great deal to sketch all about—especially by the river—and there is beauty, too, in the grey skies and rich brown moors; but how unlike the beauty of the sunny south!"

"It is not necessary to ask which you like best; your voice tells that," said Wilton.

"And are you not fond of drawing?" she resumed, as if the subject had an irresistible attraction.

"You would not look at such schoolboy productions as mine," returned Wilton, smiling. "As I said, they are mere rough professional drawings."

"Professional! What is your profession?"

This rather leading question was put with the most straightforward simplicity.

"I am a soldier."

"A soldier!" Looking very earnestly at him, "What a pity!"

"Why?" asked Wilton, surprised, and a little nettled. "Soldiers are necessary evils."

"But what evils! what symbols of deeper evils than themselves! I do not mean to say," interrupting herself with a sudden consciousness that her words were rude, while a delicate tinge of colour came and went in her cheek, "that *you* are bad or wicked, but it is so sad to think that such things, or people rather, should be necessary still."

"No doubt it would be better for the world to be in an Arcadian or paradisiacal condition, but, as it is, I am afraid it will be a long time before we can dispense with fighting or fighting men. However, you are right; war is a horrible thing, and I hope we shall have no more for a long time."

"Alas! How dare we hope that so long as it is in the power of three or four men to plunge three or four nations into such horrors!"

"Ah, I see I have encountered a dangerous democrat," said Wilton, laughing, and, vaguely pleased to see her drawn out of her cool composure, he watched the varying colour in her cheek while she was turning over the leaves of her sketch-book, seeming to seek for something. "Pardon me," said Wilton, after waiting for a reply, and determined to make her speak again, "but I imagine you are not English."

"I scarcely know: yes, I believe I am." She spoke in her former quiet tone again.

"In England all young ladies are conservative, at least all I have ever known," continued Wilton.

"Conservative!—I have read that word often in the journals. It is legitimacy, Church and State, and all that?"

"Exactly."

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"Well, the young ladies I know—and they are but few!—are very charming, very accomplished, but they know nothing, absolutely nothing; is it not strange?"

There was not the slightest approach to cynicism in her tone, but she looked at Wilton as if fully expecting him to share her wonder. "Is this the character of the young ladies of the unknown land into which I am about to plunge? I fancied Scotchwomen were educated within an inch of their lives."

"I know English girls best. Some are very learned; have been taught quantities: they can tell the very year when printing was tried, and when Queen Elizabeth first wore silk stockings, and when every great Pope was born! and they read French and German; and oh! I cannot tell all they can do and say; and yet—yet, they know nothing! they care for nothing! they lead such strange lives."

"I suppose the lives of all girls are much alike," observed Wilton, more and more curious to find out some leading facts concerning his rather original companion. "But as we are both bound for the same place, perhaps I may have some opportunity of communicating my observations on the intellectual status of the Monkscleugh young ladies."

"There is very little probability of such an event," said she, with an amused smile.

"Then you do not reside at Monkscleugh?"

"Within three miles of it."

"I am going down to a shooting-lodge called Glenraven," hoping she would respond by naming her own abode.

"Indeed! I know it: there are some lovely bits about there."

"We shall be neighbours, then."

"Yes, in a certain sense. Here," she continued, turning over a fresh page of her book, "this is the outline of a very lovely brae and burn close to your abode."

It was only a bit of broken bank; a stream dotted with stones lay below, with some mountain ash-trees spreading their feathery foliage against the sky; but there was wonderful grace and beauty in the sketch. "This gives you a very faint idea of the reality," she resumed, in a low soft tone, as if inwardly contemplating it. "The water is clear brown; it foams and chafes round these large black stones, and all sorts of delicious mosses and leaves lurk below the edge; and then ferns wave about the rocks on the brae, and there are gleams of purple heather, and tufts of green, green grass, and behind here a great wild, free hillside. Oh! it is so quiet and dreamy there!—delicious!"

"And this delightful brae is near the lodge?" said Wilton, when she paused, after listening an instant in hopes she would speak on, there was such caressing sweetness in her voice.

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"No, not very near; almost a mile away, I think." She evidently knew the place well.

"I hope you will continue to transfer the beauties of Glenraven after I become a dweller there."

"Oh, yes; whenever I have time: to draw is my greatest pleasure."

With all her frankness, he was not an inch nearer the discovery of her actual abode.

"I suppose you do not live far from the scene of your sketch?"

"Not far: Brosedale is quite a mile and a half on this side," touching the page with her pencil; "and the pathway to Monkscleugh goes over the Brae."

"Indeed! I imagine I have heard the name of Brosedale before."

"Very likely: it is, I believe, the largest gentleman's seat in the neighbourhood."

"Yes, yes; I remember now: it belongs to Sir Peter Fergusson."

"Exactly."

"She cannot be his daughter," thought Wilton; "I suppose she must be the governess. I understand he is quite the grand seigneur of Monkscleugh," he said aloud.

"Well, I suppose so. He is a good little man—at least whenever I see him he is very kind." After some further, but intermittent conversation, there was a sort of movement in the next room, and Wilton's companion begged him to go and see what was the matter.

The matter was the arrival of the promised engine and train; so Wilton's conversation and inquiries were put an end to for the present.

To his infinite disgust, when they resumed their places, a fat elderly man, a commercial traveller from Glasgow, intruded upon their tête-à-tête, and absorbed all the talk to himself. He was great in railway experiences, accidents included, and addressed a steady unceasing flow of talk to Wilton, who burned to eject him summarily from the window.

The young lady had sunk to sleep at last, carefully wrapped in Wilton's cloak, and the bagman, having exhausted either his powers or his subject, composed himself to slumber. But Wilton could not rest for a long time, and he seemed hardly to have lost consciousness before they stopped at Carlisle. Here the commercial traveller alighted, and Wilton's puzzling companion woke up.

"We shall be at Monkscleugh in three-quarters of an hour," said Wilton; "can I be of any further use to you if your friends are not there to meet you, as may be the case?"

"There will be no friends to meet me," she replied; "but I need trouble you no more: I go to the house of one of the Brosedale employés, who will send me on."

"After a hair-breadth 'scape, such as ours," said Wilton, amused at

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his own unwonted bashfulness and difficulty in putting the question, "may I ask the name of my comrade in danger?"

"My name?" with some surprise. "Oh, Ella—Ella Rivers."

"And mine; do you not care to inquire?" said Wilton, bending forward to look into her eyes.

"Yes," she said slowly, with a slight sigh; "what is your name?"

"Wilton."

"Have you no other?—there is always more character in a Christian name."

"Mine is Ralph."

"Ralph—Ralph—I do not seem to understand it. Are you noble?"

"No; simply Colonel Wilton."

"Ah! a colonel is higher than a captain, and lower than a general?"

"Just so."

She relapsed into silence, scarcely responding to Wilton's endeavours to make her talk and turn her eyes upon him. He was surprised to find himself counting the minutes that remained before he should be compelled to lose sight of his curiously fascinating companion. The parting moment came all too quickly, and Wilton was obliged to say good-bye.

"I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you again," he said politely.

"There is nothing so unlikely," she returned, with a slight blush; "but," holding out her hand, "your kindness will always be a pleasant recollection."

She bowed, and turned away so decidedly that Wilton felt he must not follow.

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TEMPLE BAR.

FEBRUARY 1875.

Leah: A Woman of Fashion.

By MRS. EDWARDES,
Author of 'Ought We to Visit Her?' 'Archie Lovell,' etc.

Chapter X.

UNDER THE LIMES.

WHAT a night it is! All above the city's heart the sky shows, duskily purple, above the flicker of the gas; but westward, in the direction of Passy, a big full moon has newly illumined the horizon, and trees and roofs at every instant stand out more delicately clear against the passionate amber of her light.

Leah and Danton traverse the Rue de Rivoli, then make their way into the garden of the Tuileries, and in five minutes' time are comparatively alone. All is still among these leafy allées—so still that you might hear a bird stir among the branches, or an insect hum. The measured footsteps of an outlying sergent-de-ville, the whispers of an occasional pair of happy lovers, seem to heighten rather than interrupt the profound silence of the place and hour.

They walk on slowly, arm-in-arm, not talking. Now that the final plunge is taken, the irrevocable moment come, that must transform "the game begun between them for a jest" into sharpest earnest, Danton's spirit is heavy, his heart disquieted within him. That he loves this girl, whom he has known for half a week, he can no longer doubt; loves her with the unreasoning passion born of sense—it may be, during the past few hours, with the dawning of a higher, more enduring feeling. Love, an expenditure (not an income) of a hundred and fifty pounds a year, and obloquy! Such is the prospect he, Eugene Danton, has to offer Colonel Pascal's daughter, in exchange for the hundred thousand pounds of Jack Chamberlayne. How abject must be his folly, should he make such an offer! How bitter, how sealed the ultimate doom of both, should she listen to him!

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And Leah, while her hand trembles on his arm, while every silent moment spent together is intoxication, Leah is shivering in her very soul with terror over her own rashness. She gauges pretty accurately the depth of Danton's feelings for her, is prepared—when, in such matters, is a woman not prepared?—for his being "imprudent" enough to declare himself, has generously resolved to soften the pangs of rejection by as large an infusion of pity as her sense of duty permits. But I must have portrayed Leah Pascal very weakly, if you think that one serious intention of braving the world's opinion, or of holding the world well lost for love, has ever presented itself to her imagination. She has been trained to consider marriage as a profession, the only lucratively honourable one open to her sex, and no more dreams of giving up Jack Chamberlayne, than a man, because he chance to have taken a love fancy, would dream of giving up his calling as a barrister or merchant. Love . . . and marriage! To realize how absolutely these two ideas have, up to the present time, been divorced from each other in Miss Pascal's mind, you must be tolerably versed yourself in the Gospel according to St. Mammon—the gospel by whose light alone the Prince Charming's children have been reared.

Leah's soul—I repeat it—shivers affrighted over the rashness of her own escapade, and in her terror her fingers involuntarily close tighter upon Danton's arm. He whispers all the reassurances as to her safety that such an appeal demands, and presently, to render the chances of any hazardous rencontre still fewer, turns with her into a narrow side walk leading towards the Place de la Concorde—a walk so shadowed by over-arching limes and chestnuts, that Leah, for the first time since she left Madame Bonchrétien's house, takes courage and lifts her veil.

"If Lord Stair himself should meet us here, he would find it a hard matter to recognise me," she remarks, with an uneasy little laugh.

"Always Lord Stair! I should have thought there was some one more nearly interested in your comings and goings than Lord Stair?"

"You mean Mr. Chamberlayne? Well, you see, it is *so* easy to set poor Jack's mind at rest. Lord Stair is the kind of man to know of a folly—I am afraid I am committing one at this moment, M. Danton—the kind of man who would know of a folly without letting you suspect his knowledge for a dozen years, and then bring it all out, fresh and green, to destroy you with at the last. Jack flies into the most fearful rages for about five minutes, and forgets everything!"

"I like that kind of character," says Danton. "You at least know, with a man like Chamberlayne, what ground you stand upon. His is a thoroughly true nature, Miss Pascal."

"Ye-s," assents Leah, taken aback. Is it to listen to Jack Cham-

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berlayne's praises that she is walking alone by starlight with M. Danton? "And still I should hardly have thought that you and he would be the kind of people to get on well together."

"'Getting on' is a strong expression, Miss Pascal. Out of a thousand, five thousand people, how many does one get on with? Chamberlayne strikes me as a frank, upright little fellow, a man I should be exceedingly ashamed to deceive—'twould be so easy—simply that."

"My beau ideal is a state of things in which it should be unnecessary to deceive any one!" cries Leah. "The exact reverse of the world in which fate has set me. You look upon me—ah! I know you must—as artificial and false. Well, I don't think I should have been so if my mother had lived. I never—believe me when I say this—never told her one falsehood."

How could any man keep his head cool with a woman as lovely as Leah, pleading eagerly, humbly for his good opinion? Danton feels strength, wisdom, self-command, all deserting him fast, and Leah goes on, under her breath, and with emotion, that for once comes from her heart. "You think Naomi handsome, do you not? You should have seen *her*. Why, the children in the street would turn to look at her as she went along, she was so beautiful—and sweet and loving! Perhaps that has turned me bitter, made me old while I am still so young, the thought of my mother, and of all the love she wasted on that—on papa, I mean. It was a runaway love-match, M. Danton. Mamma was the daughter of a rich city merchant, and she gave up all—riches, family, religion—to become my father's wife."

"And their happiness lasted?"

"Did it ever exist? When I was a child I used to look into my mother's eyes and wonder if they ever could have worn any other look than that sad, hopeless one I knew! Papa—how shall I speak of it—papa when he married thought that her father would relent, for certain. A Jew"—dark though it be, Danton can see the flash in Leah's eyes as she brings out this word—"A Jew tradesman! How could such a person keep up resentment, long, against the man of birth, the Christian gentleman, who had condescended to marry into his family? And the Jew tradesman died, just about the time I was born, and left us all paupers; did not mention my mother's name, or the name of her well-born husband, in his will."

Concentrated passion is in her voice. Easy to see that her instincts, the ineradicable instincts of race, are on the side of the Jew tradesman, her grandfather, and against Colonel Pascal.

"From that time till she died mamma's life was a martyrdom. Put Naomi, put me," cries Leah with spirit, "into such a position, and we could pull through it. We have mingled blood in our veins, are his children as well as hers, and might—my God! we *would*—

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give back wrong for wrong, hatred for hatred. But mamma was soft as water, strong only in her enormous love for us, I think. She was dying for three years; the doctors said of some heart complaint, in many syllables; of a broken heart, I say. At last, when poor Deb was a baby a few months old, mamma put her into my arms, quite suddenly, one day, and died—in a moment, as they had always told me she would die. Ah, that day, that day! And yet, in the middle of my grief, I made Naomi kneel down, I remember, and I held Debbie, and then, Naomi lisping the words after me, I thanked God, aloud, for having taken our mother out of his reach! He was away—when was papa not away?—and I wrote to him . . . such a letter! If my father loves me little now, he may well be excused, on the score of that letter alone."

She pauses, her breast heaving, every nerve in her frame a-tremble. "And your life after this?" asks Danton presently, but in an altered voice. Something in her story has touched him acutely—touched him in a widely different fashion to aught that Leah's philosophy dreams of!

"Our life after this, M. Danton, can be summed up pretty accurately in one word, 'neglect.' Papa lived in a house in London for some years, and as we could be boarded at home a little more economically than at school, we were kept there. The servants looked after us, or did not look after us, as they chose. Sometimes we went through the pretence of a governess. Sometimes we improved our minds at a cheap day-school. Debbie was always sick, and as papa said there was no money for expensive nurses, we elder ones had to look after her as best we could. But for Deb I would have run away—I swear I would. I used to tell papa so with delightful frankness whenever he reproached me for any of my domestic shortcomings. And all this time, you must know, we kept up an 'appearance.' Papa had relations and friends in London, and these people came to smart dinners occasionally, and we children had to put on smart dresses, and tell our little falsehoods, and act our little filial tableaux with papa. . . . Well, well—why should you be interested in such a history? Years went on, the London house got too dear for us, I suppose—I have never attempted to understand papa's money matters. At all events we left it, and began to drift about from lodging to lodging, from boarding-house to boarding-house, as you see us now. We have had many near chances of becoming rich, M. Danton, but, somehow, all have fallen through our fingers. Once, papa was engaged to a nabob's widow, and the bank containing her thirty thousand pounds broke, the week before the intended wedding. And once, at Cheltenham, the marriage breakfast was all but ordered for an elderly young lady, with a Manchester papa, who went wrong about settlements at the last. As for me—if you knew the number of excellent matches I have just not made!"

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"A poor look-out for Mr. Chamberlayne," remarks Danton, somewhat dryly.

"Oh, I am not speaking of the present occasion, of course. There is no one sufficiently interested in the matter to forbid the banns this time."

"You believe that? Suppose"—his voice falters—how terribly in earnest he is! thinks Leah—"Suppose some one deeply interested in the matter were to forbid the banns at this moment."

"It is very unkind of you to joke, M. Danton."

"I was never farther from joking in my life, Miss Pascal."

"Well, then, what do you mean? I declare I have not the very faintest idea. Please tell me."

Not for one instant does she lose her self-possession, although she loves. A declaration, all the debatable ground that borders on a declaration, is such familiar territory to Leah Pascal.

"I mean that *I* forbid them," says Danton—his peremptory, most unloverlike tone startles her—"and for reasons, odd as it may seem to you, unconnected with banks, settlements, or money in any shape. Thinking not of these, but of the somewhat graver issues of Life and Death, *I* forbid the banns!"

Chapter XI.

"SPARE HIM!"

Leah remains chilled and silent, and, after a minute, Danton goes on.

"If I could feel like the stranger I really am to you, Miss Pascal, I should doubtless have made my bow, and offered my congratulations with the rest. These things crowd so thickly round a professional man's path that life might be spent in vain interference were he to speak his mind about every ill-omened marriage he is forced to witness. But I am interested, too deeply, perhaps, in your welfare, and I cannot see the sacrifice without, at least, raising my voice in warning. It were better for you and Chamberlayne both to die, than to make the promises you purpose making to each other next Wednesday."

"I — — am exceedingly obliged to you, M. Danton," says Leah stiffly. She had nerved herself to listen to an outburst of passion, however wild, but was by no means prepared for a physician's lecture. "Mr. Chamberlayne and myself should be greatly flattered by your 'professional' solicitude!"

"Chamberlayne would be the first person to see the sense of my opinions," returns Danton. "In the course of the few words we exchanged the other night, Chamberlayne said enough to convince me that he judges accurately of his own state. Plain language, in a matter like this, is best. I will speak plainly. His is a disease from which there are few recoveries, Miss Pascal."

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"I am sure I don't know about that. In these days it seems that everything can be cured. Papa has had the best advice in Paris, and Dr. Ducie himself says, that with care and quiet"——

"Dr. Ducie! For a hundred-franc fee what will Ducie not say? Care and quiet may prolong the poor fellow's life. They will never patch him up into even decent health again. Ducie knows it as well as I do."

"I would not forsake the man I loved," says Leah—yes, positively, she can bring her lips to use that word "loved" with steadiness. "I would not forsake the man I loved, because of his infirmities. When I first promised to marry Mr. Chamberlayne, he was in no robuster health than he is now."

"Then I have nothing further to urge. A sacrifice made in such a spirit is, of course, heroic. One moment longer, if you will have patience to listen, and I shall have done. You are not overstrong, yourself."

And again Danton's voice falters, betrays him; again Leah prepares to temper justice with mercy.

"Not overstrong? Why I have never had a day's sickness in my life, and yet I have nursed Deb through measles, chicken-pox—every disease under the sun—without help from any one. Your science is at fault, M. Danton. I mean to live until I am a hundred years old."

"Properly taken care of, there is not the slightest reason why you should not do so."

"And what do you call being properly taken care of?"

"Shall I tell you?" Involuntarily his arm presses the fingers that rest there. "In the first place, then, your life ought to be spent without excitement."

"Excitement *is* my life. You might just as well tell me to go without food"——

"Without excitement, absolutely. Without late hours, crowded rooms, stimulants, opiates, cosmetics, or any of the other thousand poisons that a career of fashion entails."

"Good Heaven! we are getting tragic! And instead of these?"

"Instead of these, for the next two years at least, a monotonous, soporific kind of existence in some very different climate to London or Paris. Your days spent out of doors, your evenings alone with . . . ., well, you would not be sent into exile, I suppose, without one companion. Not a single dinner-party, not a ball or theatre; none of the haste, and whirl, and fever of town life, which, with a temperament like yours—ah, you talk of tragedy, but I am very serious—with a temperament like yours, can have but one most tragic ending!"

He pauses, and Leah is silent. As near a declaration as a man can go without actually declaring himself, Danton has gone; and yet—

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yet he does not stand committed! And they are fast emerging towards the Place de la Concorde; in another two minutes they will be under the gas-lights, amongst the crowd again, and his fate will rest in his own hands, still. "Spare him," whispers the better part of Leah Pascal's nature. "He loves you, as these Quixotic sort of men do love, and you would not part with a tithe of your coming riches for his sake. Spare him the present humiliation, the lasting shame of rejection." But the whisper is all too weak to combat the promptings of vanity. Every woman who is a practised coquette is apt to be more coquette than woman in moments of temptation.

"You offer an alluring picture, I must confess, M. Danton. The dolce far niente for two years, and a slave—I think you said I might be allowed a slave?—to carry out all my little whims and humours. Oddly enough"—she adds this in a graver tone—"your advice, almost word for word, was given to papa about me once, by our old doctor in London, the same doctor who had attended mamma. Deb was ill, and quite by accident he felt my pulse one day. It is the queerest, shakiest morsel of a pulse in the world. Judge for yourself."

And she stops, and taking her hand from Danton's arm, holds out her wrist to him. Just here, it chances there is an opening among the interlaced lime-branches overhead, and the pale star-lit heaven shines full on Leah's face, radiant with a look of tenderness, such as, I think, it never wore till this instant—a look, perhaps, of that dead mother whose beauty, rather than whose soul, she has inherited.

"Quick, faint, irregular. I know beforehand all the trite physician's jargon. Tell me something quite new, this time, M. Danton!"

The slender wrist on which his fingers press is warm; the lips, with their pleading sweetness, are close to his. Many a stronger man than Danton has fallen before seduction less potent. He answers—not in trite physician's jargon—not, certainly, by the telling of anything new. .... And Leah bows, for the first time during her twenty years of life, the captive not the captor!

Chapter XII.

AT THE CAFÉ CHANTANT.

An hour passes, and they are slowly sauntering along the Champs Elysées still—Elysian fields, in truth, for one pair of foolish hearts on this voluptuous autumn night! They go back day by day, almost minute by minute, over every stage of their brief acquaintance. They retrace the looks, the words, by which their love has progressed; argue hotly as to which began to like the other first, have a serious quarrel as to which will like the other longest! They speak of the future vaguely, brightly, as people speak who know that life is to be

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gone through, hand in hand. And all this time, no mention of Jack Chamberlayne, of Colonel Pascal, of October the eighteenth, Leah's marriage day. For one brief hour they are lovers, as unconditionally as though no prior claim bound either of them, as much cut off from sordid care or presentiment as were the first pair of lovers in the Garden. One hour: then comes the moment of awakening.

"I have written my prescription," Danton whispers, "and you must follow it, dearest." Dearest! And sixty minutes ago it was Mister Danton, Miss Pascal. A week ago, and each had not heard the other's name. "Two years, at least, spent tranquilly in the south"——

"With my slave to wait upon me?"

"With your slave to wait upon you. Afterwards, a life of quiet obscurity in some place where your slave may minister a little to the good of others as well as to his own happiness! These are the physician's orders. Shall you, or shall I, be the first to make them known to your father?"

"To—to papa?" she stammers; "I don't think I quite understand you. Make known our secret"——

"To your father, and also, of course, to Mr. Chamberlayne. I will do as you wish to the letter, will bear the whole burden of guilt undivided—this evening, if you choose! And yet, Leah, would it not be better to put me altogether out of sight at present, and rest your conduct upon the soundest basis of all—your own want of love for the man you are engaged to marry?"

But not a syllable can Leah force herself to utter in reply. Danton, who is accustomed to be tolerably in earnest in most things, takes it for granted that, with all her levity, the girl is rather false or faithful; has definitely foresworn, or definitely transferred her allegiance. Leah, who knows herself to be only playing—horribly serious though the comedy has grown—shrinks uneasily from the question which must put her sincerity to the test. She has been surprised into loving, much as an actress may be surprised into shedding genuine tears; and while she is half ashamed of her own folly, cannot face the inevitable shock of disillusionment without a pang.

"It would be different," she falters, at last: "Don't be angry with me for my weakness—it would kill me to have to bear your anger! Put yourself for an instant in my place, and tell me *how* I can act otherwise? It would be different if things had not gone so dreadfully far about poor Jack."

"I don't know what you mean by 'dreadfully far.'"

"Oh, well, every one belonging to us in the world has been written to, and all our relations have sent me presents, and Jack's people too. I have some hundred pounds' worth of presents, papa says—and there is the trousseau bought . . . papa has run I don't

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know how much in debt to pay for it. . . . And even the breakfast ordered!" adds Leah, gaining firmness with every corroborative detail as to the adamantine nature of her fate.

Danton, on this, turns round, and, loosing the hand which a moment before was pressed so closely on his arm, looks long and steadily into his companion's face.

"If it is beyond your strength to give up Chamberlayne, may I ask why you are here in the Champs Elysées with me?" he cries sternly. "For once let me hear the truth—give me an honest answer. I have misunderstood you long enough."

The tone, the question, are almost brutal. And Leah loves him better than she has ever loved him yet!

"I am here because I am utterly—despicably weak!" she exclaims. "And still I don't know that *you* should be cruel enough to blame me! Papa's poverty is not my fault. I cannot help being forced to marry for money any more than I can help caring—caring too much"——

And then, a tremble of the perfect lip—tears! and Danton relents: at the end of another minute is asking forgiveness for his "cruelty." A girl with indifferently shaped features and a sallow skin might have said precisely what Leah said, and produced no effect upon a lover of average sense, save that of repulsion. But when Beauty utters plaintive little mercenary sentiments, with tears in her eyes and plaintive lips, who can withstand her? Not Danton; though few men have had sharper experience on the score of mercenary beauty, and the kind of shaping it is apt to give to the lives of others.

They settle everything by a compromise: in fewer words, they settle nothing. They love (on this cardinal point there is thrown no shadow of a doubt), and Leah swears to be faithful to her love—if she can: perhaps the wisest oath a woman of her strength can make. Only let her have to-morrow for reflection. Let Danton go away to his friends at Fontainbleau, and give her time to think, commune with her own heart, cast about her for what chances of salvation may yet be open. Above all, let them keep silence respecting to-night! With the cup of Paradise at her very lips, Leah would still be a woman of the world; tremblingly alive to the risk, not so much of what she does, as of what she does being discovered. Let no one in Madame Bonchrétien's house have a suspicion of her imprudence until the moment arrives when the truth may be heard of all men. And meanwhile——

"Meanwhile," says Danton, taking her hand and drawing it again within his arm, "for one more hour, one more half-hour—I hear the clock striking the hour already—you are Leah, my own, to me! Not Miss Pascal, not Mrs. Chamberlayne. Well, half an hour's happiness

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is an enormous gain in a man's life. I am thankful for it. Don't let us speak of to-morrow again, love. There is no to-morrow for me."

His voice is changed, but tender as ever; and Leah, with a sense of relief, sighs forth some pretty platitudes about his goodness, his generosity, then nestles closer to his side. It would require a revelation from heaven to tell her *what* feelings have been resolutely put to death in Danton's breast at this moment!

Exceedingly few women and men understand each other when they are in their sober senses. How must it fare when they are under the blinding influence of love? Danton is unworldly to a fault; Leah worldly almost to a virtue. With hand clasped in hand—aye, with heart beating against heart—a gulf, deep as the nethermost hell, must ever yawn between these two. And still, for a brief space longer, they are one! Though intellects be severed wide as pole from pole; though spirits differ in quality as gold from clay; love, youth, and a silent autumn night can produce sympathies that *seem* so faultless—while they last.

They walk on slowly, miserly of every instant spent together, until they reach the Rond Point. Then, all at once, Miss Pascal discovers that she is tired, and that nothing will refresh her so much as listening to the music at a monster café chantant, about a hundred and fifty yards further on!

The music is vulgar, Danton objects; the crowd more than corresponds to the music. No matter; Leah will have her way. Even in a moment which may be termed the supreme experience of human life, in the bewilderment of dawning passion, this restless, contradictory nature is dissatisfied, craves for some other emotion beside the actual one. It is not enough to feel; Leah Pascal must see, be seen; must have an audience, though the first chance acquaintance who recognises her may bring shipwreck to every dearest ambition of her heart. And to the café chantant they go.

The old, old scene awaits them. A woman in white satin and bare shoulders, singing such songs as the Parisians affect, with brazen voice and gestures; citizens accompanied by wife and daughters, citizens accompanied by other than wife and daughters, listening. Punch, bitter beer, gas, tobacco-smoke. A good many gay women's dresses, a good many women's faces the reverse of gay. Who wants a description of a café chantant in October?

Well, Leah Pascal enjoys it. The songs are—such songs as the Parisians affect; she does not understand a word of them. The music is atrocious; she does not know one note from another. A tinkling Champs Elysées orchestra, or a ballad artistically sung, are accompaniments, simply, to whatever scene of her own life Leah Pascal may be enacting. And as to the crowd—inasmuch as a crowd has eyes and can admire—even this one is more congenial to Leah's taste

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than solitude. Her graceful figure shows, notwithstanding the heavy shawl that muffles it; the thickest veil can only partially conceal her well-poised head and throat. Not a man who passes but gives her one of the looks which to Leah are essential as the air she breathes, quickly followed by a glance, such as men do bestow upon the companion of a beautiful woman, at Danton.

In every recollection of lost joy it is said there is always *one* special remembrance that predominates—an hour, a moment, that surpassed all others in intensity, and which memory unconsciously chooses as the ineffaceable type and model of the rest. Little as she knows it, Leah, during the next three minutes, is probably standing at such a pinnacle—is tasting happiness for which regret may vainly sicken in the time to come. Vanity flattered; the craving for excitement, which to her is a physical need, gratified; and love, strong as heaven has given her to feel, warming her heart.

During the next three minutes. Then, turning her face away from the orchestra and singing people, she sees straight before her—and freezes as she sees—Lord Stair!

He stands alone, under the gaslights, scarcely a dozen yards ahead, conspicuous by reason of his tall stature, his high-bred British air, among the crowd of small Parisians. His face is impassive as Fate itself. Not a glance in the direction of Leah, and Danton betrays that he has recognised them. He is studying the little pink concert-bill he holds in his hand, and seems quietly attentive to the roulades of the lady in shoulders and satin on the stage. But Leah knows, feels, that she is on the brink of deadliest peril, and a faintness seizes her for very terror.

"Keep yourself calm," Danton whispers. "If you accept my love, will not the whole world, Lord Stair included, know it? How can it matter that you have been seen with me in any place, at any hour?"

"Take me away, or I shall faint," she gasps. "You don't know how easily I faint. Take me home—anywhere away from him! Oh, Monsieur Danton, veiled, disguised like this, I must be safe! Tell me, on your honour, that you think me safe!"

Danton leads her back as quickly as he can through the crowd. But the crowd has become denser, and before they can get free of it Lord Stair passes them so close that his showing no recognition, even of Danton, is suspicious. The lights are at their utmost brilliancy in this particular spot. They shine full upon Leah's shrouded, trembling figure; they cause the golden mouches to stand out in traitorous distinctness upon her fatally chosen skirts. And it is a boast of Lord Stair's, that he never overlooks, never forgets, one detail of a woman's dress. Leah feels as though her salvation must hang upon his want of memory now.

Clinging tight to Danton's arm, she finds herself at length in

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darkness and fresh air again, and, half turning, sees Lord Stair moving slowly in an opposite direction, his face coolly impassive as before, the little pink programme in his hand. With any other man she might feel herself safe. Any other man would have recognised or not recognised her. Not so Lord Stair. To get the weak into his power, and *keep them there*, is one of Lord Stair's pet foibles. Five, ten years hence, Leah Pascal feels that she may meet him, not knowing if he suspects her; worse still, not knowing to what kind of use his suspicions may be turned.

All the bloom is off their love-talk. The trembling fingers, the agitated voice, bear unmistakable witness as to the earnestness of Leah's terrors; and by that very earnestness Danton can measure, only too well, the probable duration of her faith to himself.

"If you accept my love, will the whole world not know it? How can it matter in what place, at what hour, you have been seen with me?"

He repeats his former consolation, with more of the same nature; and Leah answers, almost petulantly. Everything is undecided; the truth will have to be broken gradually, decorously. Whatever the circumstances, whatever her real innocence, society would never pardon a woman for such an imprudence as she has committed——

"Society! Ah, to be sure; you care for the opinions of society," cries Danton, hastily. "Forgive me, Leah; I am a fool! At every moment I—I misjudge you, child! Now, the thing is, to get you out of this 'imprudence' without loss of time—throw Lord Stair, and every one else, as much off the scent as may be."

He walks on with her at a rapid pace down the Champs Elysées and across the Place de la Concorde, then turns into the Rue de Luxembourg, and, after a minute or so, bids Leah wait under the shadow of a porte cochère while he hails a fiacre. They are now at the corner of the Rue du Mont Thabor, not two hundred yards distant from Madame Bonchrétien's house. "And I can be of no further use, Miss Pascal," says Danton, as he hands her into the carriage. "I am a quick walker, and will keep you in sight till you are safe home; but you are better without me than with me! Tell the driver to ring loudly, and do you yourself walk straight up into the drawing-room among them all. If you are questioned, you have been spending the evening with a friend—a dozen excuses will, I am sure, occur readily to you, in case"—even by the uncertain lamplight she can see the quiver of his lip—"in case, after all, you find it convenient to disown your walk in the Champs Elysées. Good-night!"

"Oh, Monsieur Danton! are we to part like this?"

She will make no money sacrifice for him. She is shivering with fear lest the paltry two hours' happiness she has accorded him should be discovered. And yet to lose one iota of his regard is agony. If it

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were possible to have money, with all that money brings, and love, such as this man could give, safely hidden away, so that it should never shame her, yet lending meaning, colour, warmth, to the chill glitter of her lot! If one could unite heaven and earth, God and mammon, honest love and a dishonest, sordid marriage! Alas! what lives are wasted, what hearts broken, over this endeavour—this "plastering together of the True and False, with vain intent to manufacture therefrom the Plausible!"

"I shall see you to-morrow, early, Monsieur Danton. Don't make me pass an utterly miserable night by parting from me so coldly."

"Coldly!"

The driver, with folded arms, with stolidly unseeing face, sits on his box; the passers-by are few. Danton and Leah are as much alone as though a hundred star-lit leagues lay between them and Paris. He takes both her hands in his, clasps them, and then . . . he hesitates for a moment, and lifts them abruptly to his lips.

"I shall see you to-morrow evening, Leah; not a moment earlier. Such a resolution as you have got to make will want four-and-twenty hours' hard thinking, at least."

"You will find me fixed as I am now," she exclaims, carried for a second fairly out of herself. "What would be the loss of friends—of the whole world to me? How can I ever be false to you after to-night?"

"And if you are 'false,' as you call it, I forgive you, my poor little Leah! Remember, I told you so beforehand. In being false to me, you will be true to all the substantial goods of this life."

"Except the greatest good of all," murmurs Leah, the tears glistening in her eyes, her features working with emotion. "If I had never known you, substantial goods, as you call them, might have satisfied me—not now."

So they part. Danton pays the coachman his fare, and directs him where to stop, in the Rue Castiglione; and in two minutes' time, Leah, like one awakening from a dream, finds herself ascending the familiar stairs of Madame Bonchrétien's house.

Now, if she can only contrive to reach the shelter of her own room unseen! Miss Smith, respectful of manner, coldly mistrustful of face, opened the porte cochère to admit her, and has already returned to the salon. If Leah can but make her way, unnoticed, past the Argus eyes that haunt that dreadful first floor, she will be safe. But no such happy chance stands her friend. The salon door is open, and old Major Macnamurdo, busily mixing hot whisky and water at an end table, sees and speaks to her. To shrink from notice, after this, were more hazardous than to confront it, Leah decides, quickly; and with Lord Stair safely out of the house, what danger is there, in fact, for her to dread? She throws back her veil; calls up one of the smiles of command in which, as we know, she is a proficient, and

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answering Major Macnamurdo's remark with a jest, passes on into the salon.

Lord Stair himself stands before the fireplace.

Chapter XIII.

M. DANTON'S WIFE.

Lord Stair stands calm and imperturbable, just as Leah saw him half an hour ago at the Café Chantant, in the Elysées; the only outward difference being that he holds a tumbler of whisky-and-water, instead of the little pink concert programme, in his hand.

From October till May, it is a received usage in the Bonchrétien establishment that the boarders shall partake of a mixture pleasantly called by Madame *punch Anglais* on Sunday evening. It was Madame herself, I believe, who, in a genial mood, instituted this conviviality, on account of "ces messieurs" dining earlier to attend the services of their faith; every glass of spirits being charged as an extra in "ces messieurs'" weekly bills. As Leah enters, Mr. Pettingall, the Comtesse, and Mrs. Amiral Tomson are drinking their punch, with gusto, before the fire; with the thermometer at eighty, Désiré builds the after-dinner fire, high as ever: Lord Stair sips, or goes through the form of sipping his. And Leah's soul prophesies evil on the spot. Lord Stair is not poisoning himself on Madame's Sunday whisky—is not keeping up Sunday conversation with Mr. Pettingall—for nothing.

She throws back her veil, loosens her shawl, and, with her heart beating till she can hear its beats, walks in amidst them all, as steadily as she will walk up the church on her father's arm next Wednesday. You will not find one woman in a thousand but possesses this kind of courage, as useful, perhaps, in its lowly way, as the fine animal contempt of danger that enables men to face sunk fences and five-barred gates in the pursuit of foxes, or mitrailleuses and Martini rifles in the quest of glory. Lord Stair fixes his eyes—when he is extraordinarily in earnest, Lord Stair's eyes lose all their obliquity—full upon her face, and Leah returns the look, unflinchingly.

"You have been out—to church, of course?" he remarks, pushing up a chair for her, an odd sort of marked gallantry in his manner.

"I have been out, but not to church, Lord Stair," returns Leah, with composure. "Evening church is a work of supererogation quite out of my line."

"It is deeply to be regretted," says old Mr. Pettingall, sanctimoniously—"thank you, Macnamurdo; you may mix me another half-glass, with rather less water this time—deeply to be regretted that the English residents in Paris avail themselves so little of the appointed observances of their church. I may say that it is a pity the

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English residents in Paris put aside so many of the other observances which in our own Protestant country are enforced!"

Lord Stair, on the deliverance of this little homily, coughs into his hand and looks moral. Mrs. Amiral Tomson and the Comtesse shake their heads, with meaning, and give each a side glance at Miss Pascal. It is evident, Leah sees, that public opinion—the cameleon public opinion of a boarding-house—is against her. Not a soul amongst them, unless it be Lord Stair, can know anything definite about herself and Danton. But suspicion-germs, like those of other diseases, float in the air, imperceptible to sight or touch, yet fulfilling their deadly office only too surely. Désiré knows that M. Danton visited the chamber of la petite, Mademoiselle being present; Rose, the chambermaid, knows that the rooms of the young ladies were vacant during the afternoon, and that music and voices were heard from the salon of M. Danton; Miss Smith, silent as the tomb, but still a woman, knows that Leah Pascal and M. Danton left the house in each other's company at ten o'clock, and that Leah Pascal returned alone at midnight.

With such materials in existence, how should suspicion not be rife? And how should suspicion, once engendered, be other than rancorous? The legitimate lover a millionaire, the unlawful one a pauper! Could infidelity blacker to Christian eyes be conceived of than this upon whose brink Leah Pascal stands?

Mr. Pettingall delivers his homily; Lord Stair coughs into his hand and looks moral; the glances of the old ladies are in themselves a whole concordance. Leah's courage waxes faint. And twenty minutes ago she was ready to brave the world, wished there were more worlds than one to brave, for Danton's sake!

The entrance of Colonel Pascal causes a momentary diversion of interest. The Prince Charming returns in excellent spirits from his club, where, indeed, every one, save his future son-in-law, has smiled upon him. With a daughter on the eve of realizing a hundred thousand pounds, 'tis surprising how genial even club acquaintance will become, men who a month before never could recollect one's name for twenty-four hours at a stretch! Just in time for a glass of Madame's punch. Well, this is better luck than he deserved. Seeing no light in the entrance hall, he half feared to find the salon deserted. "How are you, my dear Mrs. Tomson? Macnamurdo, your rheumatism better, I hope. What, Leah, in the drawing-room still? Then my poor little pet up-stairs is better than Chamberlayne's accounts lead me to fear. I need scarcely make the inquiry."

"Little Deborah has passed a quiet evening, I thank you, Colonel," remarks Miss Smith, in her chill monotone. "I have been sitting since tea-time at Deborah's side. The child has scarcely stirred."

Miss Smith—one enemy more than she counted on!

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Leah's cold fingers clasp each other tighter. Oh, if Danton were but here! With him, she almost feels that it would be a relief to stand up boldly, and, facing them all, tell the truth. Without him—well, if falsehood be necessary, she feels that she can tell *that*, too; better without him, probably, than in his presence.

"And—and you, Leah?" says Colonel Pascal, turning to his daughter. "Ah, I see, you have been spending the evening out. At Rosina Sherrington's, of course?"

Rosina Sherrington is Leah's one young lady friend in Paris, her prospective chief bridesmaid. They meet daily for conferences on wreaths, veils, flounces, and favours; they kiss when they part and meet, love, detest, confide in, and betray each other by turns. As the future course of Leah's life will run widely apart from Miss Sherrington's, I may be brief in speaking of her.

"You have spent the evening with Rosina?" repeats Colonel Pascal, a little tartly. Has not Jack, between every change from gin-and-potash to brandy-and-soda, been growling fiercely about Leah's "cursed caprice" of the afternoon? "And yet, when Chamberlayne called, I understand, Deb was too sick for you to see him!"

Leah makes no answer. She is not indisposed towards falsehood, on a large and saving scale: to tell paltry untruths that to-morrow may expose is not the sort of weakness to which she is prone. She makes no answer; her father eyes her more sharply; all the suspicious old faces round the fire eye her more sharply. Quietly and naturally, Lord Stair steps in to the rescue.

"Chamberlayne has to learn the grand lesson life teaches all of us—that a woman's will is never to be questioned. A lover! Why, my dear fellow"—he is addressing himself to Colonel Pascal—"a pretty woman may have a lover any day. But a friend, a dear, detested female friend to discuss next Wednesday's toilettes with! What chance has Chamberlayne—has any man—against a rival like that?"

The good humour returns to Colonel Pascal's face; it is the first time in this mortal life he has been called "my dear fellow" by a Viscount, and Leah breathes once more. She is saved; and, in spite of herself, her eyes give a quick look of gratitude at Lord Stair. Friend or enemy, Lord Stair, it is evident, means to play his game like a gentleman, will keep her counsel, and his own, at least until war be openly declared between them.

But though the danger as regards Leah be tided over, public feeling is still at white heat against Danton. I have before said that this out-at-elbows medical student is no favourite with what may be called the titled people of the house. Mrs. Amiral Tomson, Madame la Comtesse de Miramion, Churchwarden Pettingall (erewhile fraudulent banker's clerk), all dislike him with the bitter dislike such male souls know towards everything in human nature that is beyond *their*

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comprehension. A man who has abandoned the Church of England, and a family living in the Church of England, who attends sick theatre people for nothing, who smokes cigarettes in the salon, sings French love songs on Sunday, wears threadbare coats, and gives away his money like a prince. . . . What should these good old Pharisees feel but horror against a reprobate so utterly outside the pale of their salvation!

"I remarked that M. Danton dined at home to-day," says the Comtesse, dexterously choosing a quiet moment for the insertion of her pin-point. "It is not often we are favoured with M. Danton's society on a Sunday."

"I wish we had more of his society at all times," says Lord Stair. "I am sure there are very excellent qualities in M. Danton, if one could only get to know him better."

Never was the damnation of faint praise more effectual. Everybody gives a shake of the head and looks dubious; even Miss Smith coughs mournfully. Old Major Macnamurdo, meekest, least malicious of mankind, observes that he has long held one opinion on the subject, which is—that M. Danton is his own enemy. Major Macnamurdo would not mind telling the young man the same thing to his face—his own worst enemy.

"Whenever other excuses are wanting for the palliation of error, we are accustomed to hear the same sophistry advanced." Thus speaks Mr. Pettingall, in his biggest didactics. "Unfortunately, sir, when a man is his own enemy, he is the enemy, nine times out of ten, of society at large, and of those laws—ahem!—those fundamental moral laws by which society is held together, and the welfare of its members generally secured."

There is a little pause, as when a preacher comes to "Thirdly" in his sermon. Then, "I have never," Lord Stair remarks—"pardon me if I seem to differ from you, Mr. Pettingall—but I have never really heard of any authentic instance in which M. Danton has transgressed the Decalogue. I respect the absent too much," adds Lord Stair, "to defend them. Still, I am an enemy to vague accusations. With what particular sin is M. Danton charged?"

"It might be more appropriate to ask, with what is M. Danton not charged?" Mr. Pettingall here lowers his voice, in deference, it may be assumed, to Leah's youth and innocence. "Why, you, yourself, my lord, must have seen the class of persons with whom he unblushingly appears in public." Oh, Mr. Pettingall! With what class of persons does my lord appear, in public and otherwise—unblushingly always? "I regret to have to say these things in our good Miss Smith's presence, but both she and our worthy Madame are aware of my views on this point. M. Danton is not a person whose moral character will bear investigation."

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The tone of Mr. Pettingall's voice, the whole expression of his face, betray the scandal-monger possessed of a secret—the scandal-monger possessed of a secret that his soul burns to divulge!

"I have never analysed the cause of my feelings," remarks Colonel Pascal, pulling down one long whisker until he can inspect its quality out of the corner of his eyes, "but from the first moment Monsieur—um—ah—Danton and I met, we—well, we did not love each other. A case simply of Mr. Fell, I suppose. Elective antipathy, don't they call it?"

"And yet he really is gifted," simpers the little old Comtesse. "I declare that ut de poitrine makes me forget all my prejudices—and I am very prejudiced. A man who outrages the bienséances as M. Danton does, is a source of constant trial to one's nerves."

"A pity he don't display his talents on the stage, the proper place for them," remarks Mrs. Amiral Tomson, in her grand bassoon. "I heard him *bravouraring* as I put on my bonnet this afternoon, and I could not help thinking, on a Sunday especially, the performance was rather theatrical for a house like this—a house that advertises a Protestant partner in 'Bradshaw!' What do you say, Miss Pascal?"

"I say," cries Leah, raising her eyes with a sudden glitter in their yellow depths, "that I abhor the practice of stabbing in the dark, and despise the assassins who practise it! Accuse M. Danton of any sin, any crime you like, all of you; but do it openly, when he is present. Give him a chance of self-defence."

"You speak warmly, young lady," says old Mr. Pettingall; but he does not look at her. He stands, his back to the fireplace, his face upturned to Madame's grand gilt-and-plaster chandelier. "It is, however, possible to understand—it is really quite possible to understand how a person like this M. Danton may exercise an influence over young and imaginative minds. The more reason, perhaps"—this as in half-soliloquy—"why it becomes a duty to let him be known, henceforth, under his true colours."

Miss Smith, who up to the present moment has remained silent and downcast, now jumps up from her chair. "I should be glad if you will say nothing further against M. Danton, sir. His private life, we know, has been unfortunate, but through no crime of his. M. Danton is the friend of all who ever need help. You, who have lived here so long, Mr. Pettingall, must know that as well I do. His purse, his time, are at the call of every distressed English person in Paris, of every beggar in the street. But for us—for Madame Bonchrétien and me—he would leave himself without a sou in the world, without a coat to wear. M. Danton is the most noble, the most generous"——

Miss Smith stops short, with a moistened forehead, with quivering lips. After all, the right kind of woman's heart beats in cette pauvre

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Smeet's breast! Traduce her friend, and you will see of what materials she is made. Bonchrétien never speaks ill of any client; but then she never offends one. Miss Smith would quarrel with the whole connection of the house sooner than listen quietly to a word in dispraise of Danton.

"It is not to be supposed that M. Danton is devoid of every good quality." But it is evident from Mr. Pettingall's tone that he makes this Christian admission under protest. "That he enjoys the esteem of Madame and yourself, Miss Smith, says much—for your own excellent hearts, at least. And I am quite ready to admit that he possesses the showy habit of indiscriminate almsgiving, wrongly termed charity. Unhappily, my dear Madame, we know—all experience teaches us—that habits of this kind may exist in the same individual, side by side with the very gravest social laxity. Every one present is not aware probably, ahem—ah!"——

How he enjoys his task; how lovingly, lingeringly, the words cling to his lips.

"All the members of our little circle are not aware, probably, of the lamentable circumstances of M. Danton's private life?"

"I think most of us know to what you allude, sir," says Miss Smith. "To Madame Bonchrétien and myself M. Danton has never made a secret of his misfortunes."

"But from society at large he keeps them hidden dark enough!" cries Mrs. Tomson. "However, we will have no more of these wolves in sheep's clothing. Mr. Pettingall, by my advice, is going to make the truth known publicly. You received a letter, Mr. Pettingall, some few weeks ago?"

"From the hand of an unknown female in London." Mr. Pettingall drops his voice to the proper regulation pitch of malice, and general attention grows profound. Even Lord Stair (who knows the whole story beforehand), even Colonel Pascal condescend to become interested.

"A letter from an unknown female, addressed to the clergyman or churchwardens of our Protestant church, and calling on them in the interests of humanity to ascertain if a person named Eugene Danton was still living, or could be traced, in Paris. Mysterious, inscrutable are the ways of Providence," adds old Tartuffe, with stereotyped pious uplifting of the eyebrows. "Not only was the person sought to be traced—Eugene Danton and myself resided, as you all know, under the same roof!"

"And the letter was from one of M. Danton's old loves, of course?" suggests Lord Stair, cheerfully. "The Nemesis of some fatal grande passion. Ah, Miss Pascal, when you are ten years older, you will know more about that subject than you do now."

Leah is sitting rigid and silent; her face pale, but absolutely,

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unnaturally composed; not a movement of her hands, not a quiver of lip or eyelid betraying her.

At Lord Stair's remark she looks up with a smile. "When I am ten years older I shall probably think, as I do now, Lord Stair, that grandes passions and everything belonging to them are a mistake. That kind of Nemesis, at all events, is not likely to trouble me."

"The writer of the letter," proceeds Mr. Pettingall, "was a woman who had the most sacred of all claims upon M. Danton, and who, it seems, evinced sufficient Christian spirit to desire a reconciliation with him. Had it not been so I should have stirred no further in the matter. As regards the truth of what she stated—you, Miss Smith, and Madame Bonchrétien, were present when I placed the communication in M. Danton's hands. You are aware that he did not attempt to deny the validity of the writer's claim upon him?"

"M. Danton denied nothing," exclaims poor little Smith. "He started for London that same night, as you must well remember, sir."

"And, we may presume, found the person of whom he was in search? M. Danton has volunteered no confidence to me since his return, and I really do not feel sufficiently intimate with him to solicit it."

"Yes, he found her." And now Miss Smith keeps her eyes steadily fixed on Leah Pascal. She would go through fire and water to gratify the smallest whim of Danton's, but does not flinch from striking a death-blow at Danton's love. "On the first evening of his return, M. Danton told me thus much, and gave me leave, if there were need, to repeat it. He found the person who desired reconciliation with him in London. And she was well."

"And the person was——?" Lord Stair asks the question, yet he turns away from Leah as he does so. He is cruel, but with a man's, not a woman's cruelty, and shrinks from looking upon the girl's blanched face. "You may as well let us have the story in its integrity, Mr. Pettingall. The mysterious lady who sought reconciliation with M. Danton was ——?"

"M. Danton's *wife*, my lord."

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Inconstancy.

Time changes all things. One short year
Hath pass'd, sweet Isabel, since here
We parted. I ador'd thee then:
And now—how do we meet again?
I do not see as I have seen,
Or thou art not as thou hast been.
Thine eye is of a colder blue—
Thy cheek is of a soberer hue—
The music from thy lip is gone—
Thy harp has lost its heavenly tone;
That snow-white breast, where others find
An emblem of thy spotless mind,
Contrasted with thy nut-brown hair,
Appears no longer *even fair.*
Why is thy witchery past for me?
The world sees no decline in thee.
Is it less soft—thy silvery voice—
Than when it bade my soul rejoice?
Less fair thy form, than when my lays
Would breathe its charms in brighter days?
Alas! thou art as lovely now!
This heart is alter'd—and *not thou.*

B.

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Benvenuto Cellini.

By the Author of "Mirabeau," etc.

One of the most valuable autobiographies extant, and probably *the* most truthful, is that of Benvenuto Cellini. It has a simplicity, an unconscious truthfulness, an absence of striving for effect, that at once impresses the reader with a sense of genuineness. It frankly relates the story of his life, of his good deeds and his ill-deeds; it confesses to assassination with a naïveté and shamelessness purely Italian; it is equally candid concerning all other faults and vices. It depicts him as a man neither better nor worse than his fellows; one who was fearlessly independent, and who cared as little for the opinion of posterity as he did for that of his contemporaries, whether pope, king, or cardinal; as one possessing the courage of his age and nation; that is to say, he would fight bravely when compelled, but he preferred the dagger to the sword; of vanity it shows us he had not a little, but it was the vanity of the craftsman, not the man, and how justifiable that vanity was, the world has pronounced with universal acclaim, and will continue to do so, while time shall spare a remnant of his wonderful workmanship.

The parents of Benvenuto Cellini were both citizens of Florence; his ancestors were lords of considerable domains in the valley of Ambra. His grandfather, Andrea Cellini, was an architect; his father, Giovanni, was a man of great talent—he was an engineer, the first worker in ivory and the first constructor of musical instruments of his time; he was also a most excellent performer upon the flute and viol, of which and of all kinds of music he was passionately fond.

Giovanni and his wife had been married eighteen years before a child was born to them; then, to their disappointment, it was a girl; but on All Saints' day in the year 1500 the lady was again brought to bed, this time of a boy. It had somehow run in her head that this second child would also be a girl, consequently the joy of the father was all the greater when the good news was told him. "Lord, I thank Thee from the bottom of my heart for this present, which is very dear and welcome to me," he cried piously. When he was asked what name the boy should be given, no other answer could be obtained from him than "He is welcome!" And so he was christened Benvenuto (Welcome).

Giovanni set his mind upon making his son a great musician, and taught him at a very tender age to sing, and play upon the flute; but

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Benvenuto, whose taste inclined to drawing and artistic work, conceived an insuperable aversion to music. At fifteen, much against his father's will, he engaged himself to a goldsmith of Florence, to learn the art, and in a few months, so eager and diligent was he, that his work rivalled that of his master's best workmen.

To understand and appreciate the man, his condition and his labours, we must pause for a moment to consider the age in which he lived. Over the whole of Europe the dark night of the middle ages was slowly melting into morning, and the human mind was awakening fresh and vigorous from its sleep of centuries. But while France and England were only in the dawn, Italy—which, to quote Macaulay's splendid image, had known only the nights of an Arctic summer, the dawn beginning to reappear before the last reflection of the preceding sunset had faded from the horizon—was in the full meridian splendour. The languages of the West, although Chaucer, Rabelais, and Montaigne had done something towards forming and fixing them, were still crude and half barbarous; but the Italian had already attained its highest development; Petrarch, Dante, and Boccaccio had long since passed away. Ariosto and Machiavelli were in the fulness of their fame. In painting, sculpture, and all branches of fine art manufacture, the French and English were mere barbarians. In freedom and government they were equally behind; feudalism was still all powerful in the one, while in the other it was giving way, only to be superseded by the absolutism of the last two Henrys; the burgher class was only on the threshold of its independence and future power, while the condition of the class beneath it was little removed from serfdom; coarse, uninventive, barbarously ignorant, the productions of the workmen were of the rudest and most elementary kind. In Italy, Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Raffaelle, and a host of other great artists were in the zenith of their genius. In the free states the middle classes had risen to the highest power; while the artificers were strong in guilds and municipalities.

Of all the Italian states, Florence stood pre-eminent in the freedom of her institutions, the enlightenment of her citizens, and the splendour of her art collections. No person who was not a member of a merchant or trade guild was eligible to a public office; thus the nobles were excluded from all power in the state unless they took upon themselves the condition of artisans. Lorenzo de'Medici, who had spent vast sums in collecting such manuscripts and specimens of classic art as mediæval barbarism had spared, in founding libraries, and in supporting rising genius, in order to cultivate the taste of Florentine artists and workmen, had freely thrown his splendid collections open to all, and established in his gardens, which were filled with statuary and some of the finest models of antiquity,

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a school of instruction in the fine arts. This noble patron, who so well-deserved the cognomen of the "Magnificent," gave equal encouragement to the more mechanical professions, such as the construction of mosaics, engraving on gems, and the manipulation of the precious metals; and the goldsmith's art, even while Cellini was a youth, had attained a high degree of perfection, but it was reserved to him to carry it to a height which his successors will never surpass, and have not yet even approached.

Benvenuto was scarcely sixteen when he was banished from his native city for six months, on account of an affray. He passed his short exile at Siena, working hard at his calling, and already deriving from it considerable emolument. After a time he visited Rome, but soon returned to Florence, where he remained for two years, until a second and more serious affair obliged him to fly from the city. Envy of his surpassing ability had created for him among his craft many enemies, who frequently annoyed and insulted him. Benvenuto, being of a fierce and passionate temper, was not slow to resent these injuries, and one day he struck a certain Gherardo Guasconti so violent a blow upon the temple that he fell down for dead. For this he was summoned before the Council of Eight, and fined four bushels of meal. Feeling himself to be very hardly used, and still further exasperated by the refusal of a relative, who was under deep obligations to his family, to be bail for him, he fell into a violent fury, rushed out of the court and away to his workshop, seized upon a dagger, and, running to the house of Gherardo, stabbed him as he sat at the table; fortunately the weapon pierced only the clothes without even touching the skin. "Seeing," to quote his own words, "that none of my adversaries stood upon the defensive, and that Gherardo lay stretched upon the ground like a corpse, I scorned to meddle with them, but ran downstairs like a madman. When I reached the street I found the rest of the family, about a dozen in number, ready to attack me. One held a ball of iron, another a thick iron tube, another a hammer, while others had cudgels. Rushing amongst them like a mad bull, I threw down four or five, and fell to the ground with them, now aiming my dagger at one, now at another. Those who continued standing exerted themselves to the utmost, belabouring me with their hammers and cudgels, but I neither received nor did any harm. I lost nothing but my cap, which fell into the hands of some of my adversaries, who at first had fled. Being assured it was only my cap, each of them struck it with his weapon; but upon looking about for the wounded and slain, it appeared that none of them had sustained any injury."

The magistrates fulminated the most terrible edicts against the delinquent or any person that should harbour him, but he escaped in the disguise of a monk, and made his way to Rome. Here

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he cultivated his artistic taste by copying and studying the works of Michael Angelo and Raffaelle, and his skill as a goldsmith secured him the most munificent recognition and patronage. Among other great people whom he attracted by the extraordinary beauty of his designs and workmanship, which drove every goldsmith of Rome to despair, was an immensely rich Spanish prelate, the Bishop of Salamanca, who employed him to make a massive silver vase to hold water. Night and day he worked upon this, determining that it should be a chef-d'œuvre, and at the end of three months the task was completed. It was adorned with all kinds of figures of flowers, foliage, and animals, and was altogether a miracle of beauty. But the imperious churchman considered that the work should have been done more quickly, and vowed that he would be as slow in paying as the artist had been in finishing. Benvenuto was exceedingly mortified at this, as he had expended nearly all his means upon the materials. Shortly afterwards, however, accident gave him a means of retaliation, which his daring and determined temper made no scruple to seize upon. One day a gentleman, while examining the vase, broke the delicate spring of the handle; it was sent away with all expedition to Cellini, in order that the injury might be repaired before the Bishop could discover it. But when the servant returned to take it back he received for answer, "Go tell your master it shall not be taken out of my shop till I am paid for my trouble." In vain did the man bully, beg, pray; Cellini was firm. With threats and imprecations he departed at last, but only to return soon afterwards with a crowd of Spaniards, whom he ordered to break open the shop; but Cellini, pointing the muzzle of a fusil at them, swore that he would shoot the first who approached. The disturbance attracted the passers-by, and the gallant goldsmith soon had some stout partisans by his side. The Spaniards fled, and were obliged to confess all to their master The Bishop, in a towering passion, ordered one of them to go back and tell Cellini that, if he did not instantly give up the vase, he would leave no part of him whole except his ears, but if he brought it without delay his demands should be satisfied. Undaunted by these menaces, the goldsmith, arming himself with dagger and coat of mail, and followed by an apprentice bearing the vase, repaired to the Bishop's house. After passing through a long line of frowning domestics he entered the presence "of this renowned prelate, who," he says, "uttered the most priest-like, Spaniard-like words I ever heard. All this time I never once looked at him, or so much as answered a single word, at which his lordship discovered more resentment than ever, and having ordered pen, ink, and paper, desired me to write a receipt. I then looked him full in the face, and told him I would readily do so after I had received my money. The haughty Bishop was then more exasperated than ever; but in fine, after a great deal of scolding and

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hectoring, I was paid, and having written an acquittance, left the place in high spirits."

When the affair was reported to Pope Clement, he was highly delighted, and said publicly that he approved of Cellini's behaviour; upon which the Bishop, finding himself in the wrong, declared his intention of employing Benvenuto in all commissions of importance. "If he does, I shall insist upon being paid beforehand," was the stout reply. The story was of course circulated all over Rome, and enormously increased Cellini's business, one rich prelate giving orders that constant employment should be found for him.

Far, however, from resting content with what he had already achieved, he was ever eager to extend his knowledge of art, to study the collateral branches of his craft, and he now applied himself to seal-engraving and enamelling. "The art of enamelling is extremely difficult," he says. "Nevertheless, I applied myself to it with the greatest ardour, and though I found it very hard to be acquired, such was the pleasure I took in learning it that its greatest difficulties appeared delightful to me." Some damaskeened Turkish daggers coming in his way he, with his usual enthusiasm, set about learning the art of damaskeening, and mastered it in a very short time, and so as to excel his models.

His artistic career was presently interrupted by the plague, of which he nearly died, and soon afterwards by the siege of Rome.* He now proved himself to be as brave and skilful a soldier as he was excellent as an artist. He was desired to raise a company of fifty men to guard the house of Colonna, one of the great Roman nobles. While upon the walls during the assault he tells us that he shot no less a person than the commander of the enemy's forces, the Constable de Bourbon. Upon the taking of the city, the Pope and his soldiers retired to the Castle of St. Angelo, and here again Cellini as an artilleryman did great execution among the besiegers. "My drawing," he says, "my elegant studies, and my taste for music, all vanished before this butchering business." The Pope was now reduced to such extremities that he was compelled to employ him to melt down the gold setting of his regalia, which weighed one hundred pounds, concealing the jewels, sewn into the lining of his dress, about his own august person.

As soon as terms were concluded with the imperialists, Benvenuto paid a visit to his father; but the plague raging at the time in

* In 1526, after the liberation of Francis the First from his captivity and the renewal of the war between him and Charles the Fifth, the Pope, who had hitherto been on the side of Germany, went over to France, upon which Rome was besieged by the Imperialists under Charles de Bourbon, who had transferred his services from his legitimate sovereign to the Emperor.

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Florence, he made but a short stay, journeying on to Mantua; there he remained only four months, conceiving a disgust for the place on account of an attack of ague. He returned to Florence to find that his father had fallen a victim to the pestilence. His brother and sister, however, prevailed upon him to remain with them for a little time.

He was now employed by a certain gentleman to make a golden medal to be worn in the hat, the design of which was the figure of Hercules tearing asunder the jaws of the lion. While engaged upon it, he was visited by Michael Angelo. "My manner of working was entirely new to the divine Michael Angelo," he says, "so that he praised me to such a degree that I conceived the strongest inclination to do something extraordinary. But as I had no other employ than setting jewels, though I could not earn more money in any other branch, I was not yet satisfied, but wished to be concerned in business of more consequence." About the same time one Federigo Ginori wishing to have a medal representing Atlas with the world upon his shoulders, requested Michael Angelo to draw him the design. "Go to a young jeweller whose name is Benvenuto," said the great artist, "he will serve you as well as you could wish; yet that you may not think I shun so slight a trouble, I will sketch you a design, and speak to Benvenuto to draw you another, and take the better of the two for your model." Federigo followed these instructions, and Benvenuto's model obtained the preference. His design was "a figure engraved upon a thin plate, supporting on its shoulders the heavens, represented by a ball of crystal, on which was cut the zodiac, with a field of lapis lazuli." This anecdote will show the high estimation in which his genius was held even at that time.

The Pope declared war against Florence, and invited him to return to Rome, as he wished to employ him upon affairs of the greatest importance. The invitation was sent through a friend, who strongly advised him "to drop all other projects, and not join with a pack of senseless rebels against his Holiness." After a little hesitation, Benvenuto, who throughout his life seems to have had a keen eye for his personal interests, although he had been already commanded to take arms for the defence of his native city, secretly departed for Rome.

The great work upon which the Pontiff employed him was a button for the pontifical cope; it was to be round, in the form of a large trencher, and half, or one-third, of a cubit wide. Several other artists presented designs for the work, but Benvenuto's was incomparably superior to all. He thus describes it: "I had laid the finest diamond exactly in the middle of the work, and over it I had represented God the Father, sitting in an easy attitude; His right hand was raised in blessing. Under it I had drawn three little boys, who supported it with their arms raised aloft. One of these boys, who stood in the middle, was

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in full, the other two in half-relievo. Round it were several other figures of boys, placed amongst other glittering jewels. The remainder of God the Father was covered with a mantle, which waved in the wind, from whence issued several figures of boys, with other striking ornaments most beautiful to behold." *

The Pope now conferred great favours upon him, and among others made him Stamp Master of the Mint, in which capacity he executed several beautiful coins.

The next anecdote is less pleasing. His brother having been killed in a fray, a restless desire for revenge upon his slayer took possession of him. "Perceiving," he says, "that my solicitude and anxious desire for revenge deprived me both of sleep and appetite, and threw me into a lingering disorder, and not regarding the baseness of the undertaking, one evening I prepared to put an end to my inquietude. The musketeer (he who had killed his brother) lived hard by a place called the Torre Sanguigna. Just after sunset, about eight o'clock, as this musketeer stood at his door with his sword in his hand, when he had finished supper, I with great address came close to him with a long dagger, and gave him a violent back-handed stroke, which I had aimed at his neck. He instantly turned round, and the blow falling directly upon his left shoulder, broke the whole bone of it, upon which he dropped his sword, quite overcome by the pain, and took to his heels. I pursued, and in four steps came up with him, when raising the dagger over his head, which he lowered down, I hit him exactly upon the nape of the neck. The weapon penetrated so deep, that though I made a great effort to recover it, I found it impossible; for at this instant there issued out of Antia's house four soldiers with their drawn swords, so that I was obliged to draw mine also in my own defence." He takes shelter in the Palace of the Duke Alessandro. "He was more ready to protect me," he continues, "as the soldiers who had interrupted me related the whole affair as it happened, mentioning the great difficulty with which they had drawn the dagger out of the neck of the wounded person, who was entirely unknown to them. But Giovanni Bandini, happening to pass that way, told them that the dagger belonged to him, and he had lent it to Benvenuto, who wanted to revenge the death of his brother. The soldiers expressed great concern at their having interposed, though I had taken my revenge to the full."

After a lapse of eight days, the Pope sends him word by one of the gentlemen of his bedchamber that he knows all that has happened, that his Holiness is very much his friend, and desires him to go on with his business without giving himself any uneasiness. When he

* This button is still preserved in the Castle of St. Angelo, and is still used upon great feast days.

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first enters the Pontiff's presence, he is received with angry looks, but when he shows him the work he has been doing his face clears, and he says: "Now you have recovered your health, Benvenuto, take care of yourself." "I understood his meaning, and told him I should not neglect his advice."

This story is an admirable illustration of the manners and morals of the Italy of the sixteenth century, not more so in its incidents than in the naïve, unconscious tone in which it is narrated.

As a matter of course the high favour he enjoyed at Court created numerous enemies, who endeavoured to ruin him by various slanderous accusations. Once he was accused of seeking to appropriate jewels entrusted to him for setting, at another of issuing false coins, both of which slanders he triumphantly rebutted. Notwithstanding, however, he did not consider himself rewarded according to his abilities, and was much chagrined at a post he had solicited being given to another.

Here is an anecdote which powerfully illustrates the sturdy courage and independence of the man's character. The Pope ordered him to design and make a very splendid chalice, but failed to provide the funds necessary for the material, which was to be of gold. Going abroad about this time to Bologna, he left word with the Cardinal Salviati, whom he appointed legate during his absence, that Benvenuto was to be hurried on with the work. "The stupid Cardinal," to quote the artist's own words, "sent to me in about eight days, ordering me to bring my work with me; but I went to him without it. As soon as I came into his presence, he said to me, 'Where is this fantastical work of yours? Have you finished it?' I answered, 'Most reverend sir, I have not finished my fantastical work, as you are pleased to call it, nor can I do so unless you give me wherewithal to enable me.' Scarcely had I uttered these words, when the Cardinal, whose physiognomy was more like that of an ass than a human creature, began to look more hideous than before, and immediately proceeding to abusive language, said: 'I'll confine you on board a galley, and then you will be glad to finish the work.' As I had a brute to deal with, I used the language proper on the occasion, which was as follows: 'My lord, when I shall be guilty of crimes deserving the galleys, then you may send me thither; but for such an offence as mine I am not afraid. Nay, I will tell you more. On account of this ill-treatment I will not finish the work at all, so send no more for me, for I will not come, unless I am dragged hither by the city guards.' The foolish Cardinal then tried by fair means to persuade me to go on with the work in hand, and to bring what I had done for him to examine. In answer to all his persuasions I said, 'Tell his Holiness to send me the materials, if he would have me finish this fantastical work.' Nor would I give him any other answer, insomuch that, despairing of success, he at last ceased to

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trouble me with his importunities." The Cardinal fails not to represent the matter in the worst possible light to the Pope, and when his Holiness returns, he sends for the recalcitrant artist, who, to still further delay the work, has been for some time previously suffering from a complaint in the eyes which has almost deprived him of sight. The scene which follows between him and the Pope is wonderfully suggestive.

"As soon as I appeared before him, he said to me, with many unbecoming words, "Let me see that work of yours; is it finished?" Upon my producing it, he flew into a more violent passion than before, and said: 'As there is truth in God, I assure you, since you value no living soul, that if a regard for decency did not prevent me I would order both you and your work to be thrown out of window.' Seeing the Pope thus transformed into a savage beast, I was for quitting his presence directly; and as he continued his bravadoes, I put the chalice under my cloak, muttering these words to myself,—'The whole world would prove unable to make a blind man proceed in such a work as this.' The Pope then with a louder voice than before said, 'Come hither, what is it you say?' For a while I hesitated whether I should not run downstairs. At last I plucked up my courage, and falling upon my knees, exclaimed as loud as I could, because he continued to bawl: 'Is it reasonable when I become blind with a disorder that you should wish me to continue my work?' After this a reconciliation takes place."

But the affair is not yet ended. New calumnies against Benvenuto are poured into the Pope's ears by envious artists, and Benvenuto is deprived of his post of Stamp Master of the Mint. Upon which he retaliates by refusing to render up the chalice, which is not yet finished. "Five hundred crowns," he says, "which I received are indeed his Holiness's property, and those I will restore him; as for the work, it is mine, and I will dispose of it as I think proper." He returns a similar answer to two gentlemen who are sent to demand it, and who on his refusal conduct him before the Governor of Rome. But he is still firm as ever. "Do what you will, my lord," he says, "you shall have nothing more than the five hundred crowns, and this you may tell the Pope. Your menaces do not in the least intimidate me, for I am an honest man, and fear God only."

How after many further complications the affair is amicably settled, there is not space here to relate.

Benvenuto had a great desire to learn the secrets of necromancy, and, making the acquaintance of a Sicilian priest, an adept in the art, he witnessed a conjuration among the ruins of the Colosseum. The credulous naïveté with which he describes the scene forms a marvellous contrast to the clear-headed man of genius, the bearder of cardinals and popes, which has been hitherto described. "The priest one evening prepared to satisfy me,

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and desired me to look out for a companion or two. I invited one Vicenzio Romoli, who was an intimate acquaintance; he brought with him a native of Pistoia, who cultivated the black art himself. We repaired to the Colosseum, and the priest, according to the custom of necromancers, began to draw circles upon the ground with the most impressive ceremonies imaginable; he likewise brought thither assafœtida, several precious perfumes, and fire, with some compositions which diffused noisome odours. As soon as he was in readiness, he made an opening in the circle, and having taken us by the hand, one by one, he placed us within it. Then having arranged the other parts, and assumed his wand, he ordered the other necromancer, his partner, to throw the perfumes into the fire at the proper time, intrusting the care of the fire and the perfumes to the rest, and began his incantations. This ceremony lasted above an hour and a half, when there appeared several legions of devils, insomuch that the amphitheatre was filled with them." Benvenuto asks to be brought into the company of a lady with whom he is in love; but for this purpose the necromancer appoints a second 'séance,' as he requires "a pure and immaculate boy." The meeting takes place, and the magician draws a circle "with more wonderful art, and in a more solemn manner than before." "The necromancer having begun to make his tremendous invocations, called by their names a multitude of demons, who were the leaders of the several legions, and invoked them by the virtue and power of the eternal, uncreated God, in the Hebrew language, as likewise in Latin and Greek, insomuch that the amphitheatre was almost in an instant filled with demons, a hundred times more numerous than at the former conjuration . . He then requested me to stand resolutely by him, because the legions were now above a thousand more in number than he had designed; and besides, these were the most dangerous, so that after they had answered my questions, it behoved him to be civil to them, and dismiss them quietly. At the same time the boy was in a terrible fright, saying that there were in that place a million of fierce men who threatened to destroy us, and that, moreover, four armed giants of an enormous stature were endeavouring to break into our circle." Benvenuto gets horribly frightened, and they remain within the circle until the bells ring for morning prayer. As they go to their homes, the boy tells them that two of the demons whom they had seen in the amphitheatre went before them, leaping and skipping, sometimes upon the roofs of the houses, sometimes upon the ground.

Being insulted by one of his cowardly traducers, he leaves him for dead, and flies to Naples. But the man recovering, the Pope recalls him, and again takes him into favour. Soon after his return, however, he slays an old enemy, named Pompeo of Milan, and takes shelter in Florence. This act is destined to bring upon him more

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trouble than any other of his adventurous life, by entailing the enmity of Pier Luigi, a natural son of Pope Paul the Third, who has married a daughter of Pompeo's. However, for the present, he receives the pardon of the Pope, and again returns to his service.

In 1537 he departs for France, having been frequently invited to visit that country. He is most graciously received by King Francis, but being seized with an illness, he takes a capricious dislike to the country, and resolves to return to Rome. On his arrival, thanks to the intrigues of Pier Luigi, the Pope orders his arrest for the murder of Pompeo, and he is thrown into the Castle of St. Angelo. The French King interposes for his release, which so offends the Pope, that he resolves to imprison him for life. Benvenuto now undergoes for a considerable time the most terrible sufferings, being confined during a portion of his incarceration in a loathsome dungeon. With wonderful ingenuity he contrives to effect his escape, but in dropping from the outward wall, breaks his leg, is ultimately recaptured, and subjected to greater severities than before. At length he is released through the interposition of the Cardinal of Ferrara, who has been instructed by King Francis to bring Benvenuto to Paris with him.

So to France he goes once more, and arrives there in the year 1540. The King sets him at once to make models for twelve silver statues, six gods and six goddesses, each exactly his own height, to serve as candlesticks round his table, and gives him the Castle of Nesle as a residence to work in. All these arrangements, however, are very nearly brought to an end by the Cardinal wishing to fix his salary at three hundred crowns; upon which Benvenuto is so indignant that he makes up his mind to instantly quit the kingdom, and is already upon his way, when the King's messengers overtake him and bring him back. His salary is now to be the same as that which was given to Leonardo da Vinci, seven hundred crowns.

We have now some striking pictures of the avarice and corruption of the Court. He is engaged to make a very splendid golden salt-cellar for the King's table, for which purpose the treasurer is ordered to give him one thousand old gold crowns. As he is conveying the money home in a basket he is attacked by four bravoes, who have been employed by the treasurer to rob him. He, however, with the help of some passers-by, puts the fellows to flight. At another time the King orders a handsome sum of money to be presented to him, which is appropriated by the Cardinal Ferrara. He, however, basks in the full sunshine of royal favour, receives letters of naturalisation, and is created lord of the Castle of Nesle. But he works more indefatigably than ever; and at this time designs some of his finest and most extensive works. Failing, however, to pay sufficient adulation to the King's mistress, Madame d'Étampes, he incurs the resentment of that haughty beauty, from which during the remainder of his

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residence in France he will endure continual annoyance. He tries to propitiate her by the present of a beautiful silver cup; the result of this attempt is highly characteristic of the man. He has sent in a message to her by her waiting-maid. "Upon acquainting her lady with my arrival, and the present I had brought, the latter answered disdainfully, 'Tell him to wait!' Having heard this, I armed myself with patience, and continued in suspense until she was going to dinner. Perceiving that it was growing late, hunger provoked me to such an extent that, unable to resist its cravings any longer, I gave the lady a hearty curse, and going directly to the Cardinal of Lorraine made him a present of the cup, begging he would stand my friend, and prevent me from being deprived of his good graces." The story getting to the favourite's ears, she is more incensed against Benvenuto than before. Nor is this all. In the tennis-court of the castle are several habitations occupied by men of different trades; requiring these places, he sets to work to expel these people. One, a manufacturer of gunpowder, was formerly a domestic of Madame d'Etampes. This fellow proving refractory, our artist orders his men to cast all his effects into the street, and take forcible possession. This being regarded as a personal insult to Madame, very nearly embroils him with the King, and *does* embroil him in a lawsuit. The following passage gives a very unfavourable view of the French Courts of Justice at the time.

"It is customary in France to make the most of a suit which they commence with a foreigner, or with any other person who is not used to law transactions; as soon as they have any advantage in the process, they find means to sell it to certain persons who make a trade of buying lawsuits. There is another villainous practice which is general with the Normans, I mean that of bearing false witness; so that those who purchase the suits immediately instruct five or six of these witnesses as there happens to be occasion: by such means, if their adversary cannot produce an equal number to contradict and destroy their evidence, and happens to be ignorant of the custom of the country, he is sure to have a decree given against him." But Benvenuto is not disposed to put up with the law's delays, and settles the affair in his own fashion. "I found that when verdicts were given against me," he says, "and that there was no redress to be expected from the law, I must have recourse to a long sword which I had by me, for I was always particularly careful to be provided with good arms. The first I attacked was the person who commenced that unjust and vexatious suit; and one evening I gave him so many wounds upon the legs and arms, taking care, however, not to kill him, that I deprived him of the use of both his legs. I then fell upon the other who had bought the cause, and treated him in such a manner as quickly caused a stop to be put to the

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proceedings. For this and every other success I returned thanks to the Supreme Being."

Madame d'Etampes sets up an inferior artist, named Primaticcio, as a rival to Benvenuto, and endeavours to procure for him the execution of a colossal figure of Jupiter, which has been designed by Cellini. Upon which, the latter plainly tells his rival that if he interferes in his work he will kill him as he would a mad dog, and that if ever he drops a word to the King of the matter he will put him to death without mercy.

About this time, however, he delights the King by the completion of the golden salt-cellar before mentioned. The description of this exquisite masterpiece is worth giving in full: "It was about two-thirds of a cubit, being entirely of gold, and admirably engraved by the chisel. I had represented the sea and earth both in a sitting posture, the legs of one placed between those of the other, as certain arms of the sea enter the land, and certain necks of the land jut out into the sea. I put a trident into the right hand of the figure that represented the sea, and in the left a bark of exquisite workmanship, which was to hold the salt; under this figure were its four sea-horses, the form of which in its breast and fore-feet resembled that of a horse, and all the hind-part from the middle that of a fish; the fishes' tails were entwined with each other, and the whole group was placed in a striking attitude. This figure was surrounded by a variety of fishes and other sea animals. The undulation of the water was properly exhibited, and likewise enamelled with its true colours. The earth I represented by a beautiful female figure, holding a cornucopia in her hand, entirely naked, like the male figure; in her left hand she held a little temple, the architecture of the Ionic order; this was to put the pepper in. Under this female figure I represented most of the finest animals which the earth produces, and the rocks I partly enamelled and partly left in gold; I then fixed the work on a base of black ebony, and there I placed some golden figures in more than mezzo-relievo; these were intended to represent Morning, Noon, Evening and Night. There were also four other figures of the four principal winds, of the same size, the workmanship and enamel of which were elegant to the last degree."

Besides this, he completes his silver statue of Jupiter, which is pronounced by all to be a masterpiece of art. But growing weary of the continual persecution of Madame d'Etampes, and being, besides, of a restless disposition, that cannot endure to remain for any length of time in one place, he becomes anxious to return to Italy; and at length obtains the King's permission to do so, on promise of return—a promise destined never to be fulfilled, although he leaves all his effects behind him.

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He now enters the service of Cosmo de Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, by whom he is commissioned to make a colossal group in bronze of Perseus and Andromeda, to adorn the great square of Florence. As usual, he is annoyed by a rival of inferior abilities and more adulatory disposition, who contrives to throw various obstacles in his way. This time, however, it is a man not unknown to fame, Bandinello the sculptor. He executes some statues in marble, which greatly please the Duke, but his great work is to be the Perseus. Just as all is prepared for casting it, he is seized with so serious an illness, in consequence of over-exertion, that he is obliged to take to his bed, and leave all to his men. While he is lying prostrate beneath such a violent fever that he believes himself to be dying, one of his workmen enters, to announce that the work is spoiled beyond all remedy. His description of the scene which follows is really sublime.

"No sooner had I heard the words uttered by this messenger of evil, than I cried out so loud that my voice might be heard to the skies, and got out of bed. I began immediately to dress. Having huddled on my clothes, I went with a mind boding evil to the shop, where I found all those whom I had left so alert and in such high spirits standing in the utmost confusion and astonishment. I thereupon addressed them thus: 'Since you would not or could not follow the method I pointed out, obey me now I am present; let none of you offer to oppose or contradict me, for such cases as this require activity and not counsel.' Hereupon one Alessandro Lastricati had the assurance to say to me, 'Look you, Benvenuto, you have undertaken a work which our art cannot compass, and which is not to be effected by human power.' Hearing these words, I turned round in such a passion, and seemed so bent on mischief, that both he and all the rest cried out, 'Give your orders, and we will second you in whatever you command, as long as we have breath in our bodies.'"

He orders them to bring a load of dried oak, with which he begins to fill the grate. "As soon as the concreted metal began to feel the power of this violent fire it began to brighten and glitter. In another quarter I made them hurry with the tubes with all possible expedition, and sent some of them to the roof of the house to take care of the fire, which, through the great violence of the wind, had acquired new force; and towards the garden I had ordered some tables with pieces of tapestry and old clothes to be placed in order to shelter me from the rain. As soon as I had applied the proper remedy to each evil, I with a loud voice cried out to my men to bestir themselves, and lend a helping hand; so that when they saw the concreted metal began to melt again, the whole body obeyed me with such zeal and alacrity that every man did the work of three. Then I caused a mass of pewter, weighing about sixty pounds, to be thrown upon the metal in the

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furnace, which soon became dissolved. Finding I had accomplished what seemed to my ignorant assistants as difficult as to raise the dead, I recovered my vigour to such a degree that I no longer perceived I had any fever, nor had I the least apprehension of death. Suddenly a loud noise was heard, and a glittering of fire flashed before our eyes as if it had been the darting of a thunderbolt. Upon the appearance of this extraordinary phenomenon terror seized on all present, and on none more than myself. This tremendous noise being over, we began to stare at each other, and perceived that the cover of the furnace had blown off, so that the bronze began to melt. I immediately caused the mouths of the moulds to be opened, but finding that the metal did not run with its usual velocity, and fearing that its fusibility was injured by the intensity of the fire, I ordered all my dishes and porringers, in number about two hundred, to be placed one by one before my tubes, and part of them to be thrown into the furnace; upon which all present perceived that my bronze was completely dissolved, and that my mould was filling, they now with joy and alacrity assisted and obeyed me. I, for my part, was sometimes in one place, sometimes in another, giving directions and assisting my men, before whom I offered up this prayer, 'O God, I acknowledge in gratitude this mercy that my mould has been filled; I fall prostrate before Thee, and with my whole heart return thanks to Thy Divine Majesty.' My prayer being over, I took a plate of meat which stood upon a little bench, and ate with great appetite. I then drank with all my journeymen and assistants, and went joyful and in good spirits to bed, and rested as well as if I had been troubled with no manner of disorder."

And so his great work is brought to a triumphant conclusion, and placed in the public square, upon which the populace raise a loud shout of applause, and all the learned men and scholars vie with each other in writing encomiums upon it.

Benvenuto passed his remaining life in the service of the Duke, not without many heart-burnings and vexations caused by jealous rivals. Although many interesting details and anecdotes might yet be added, space will not allow their narration. One other of his works must not pass unnoticed, a marble figure of Christ upon the cross, which Vasari distinguishes as "a most extraordinary and exquisite performance." This figure he intended for his own tomb, but after ornamenting the Duke's chapel in the Palazzo Pitti for several years, it was sent as a present, in 1577, to Philip the Second of Spain, by whom it was placed in the Church of the Escurial.

Benvenuto Cellini died on the 15th of February, 1570, and was interred with great pomp in the Chapter House of the Nunziata at Florence.

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Lilith.

Chapter VIII.

For some time after that evening Vane lived like a man in a mad dream of delight: the world seemed to him to have taken a new aspect of glory and joy; to reflect from a million facets the beauty of the woman whom he loved. He was happy in lying at her feet, calling her his fairy queen, inventing new epithets for her wondrous fascination, while she looked down at him with the same strange smile which she had worn that night. He was happy in the long loving talks which they held every night in the garden by the low wall, the scene of his first declaration to her: talks which were timed by the sound of the organ, for so soon as the last notes began to be heard, they would go in smiling to meet the man whom they were deceiving so hideously. It was a dream of happiness, but a dream wherein was no calmness, no repose, and one which could hardly endure unbroken. Vane was not a man of evil nature: his better spirit had been first lulled to sleep by a slothful deadly charm, even as the Greek sailors were lulled by the Sirens' song, and had then been stifled for a time by the sudden grasp of an overpowering temptation. But when the first fierce waves of passion had spent their force and begun to subside and beat in regular rhythm, when his guilty love became a part of his daily life, and the fascination of the danger attending it had lost its novelty, then by slow degrees the voice of the good that was in him rose up and made itself heard. For successful and consistent wrong doing strength is necessary as much as for the doing of good, and Vane had not that strength. He listened alternately to the voices of his good and evil angels, and could not compel himself to follow either one or the other with an unwavering purpose. He hung as it were helplessly between virtue and vice, stretching out his hands now to the former, now to the latter, and never stretching them far enough. The thought of the resolutions which he had made only to break them at the bidding of a woman's smile, of the unhallowed slavery to which he had bound his soul, of the kind trusting friendship which he had basely betrayed, would come before his mind at times in an aspect of stern truth. But Lilith's presence availed, for a long time at least, to dispel his moods of gloomy, barren remorse; to shake off from him the burden, which he sometimes felt to be very heavy, of his continual deception; to soothe the anguish which every kind word from Falcon's lips inflicted on him. Lilith seemed untroubled by any weight or consciousness of sin; her

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laugh was as light, her step as free as ever, and Vane clung to her love as being both the joy and the support of his life. The idea of her continued constancy to him was the one thing in which he found never-failing comfort. With the terrible blindness of lovers, he forgot that her constancy had been already tried and found wanting; that since she had proved unfaithful to the man who had every claim upon her, she was not likely to prove faithful to him who had none.

It was when Vane was in one of his most unhappy moods, sitting on the terrace with his head supported on his hands, looking gloomily seawards, that Lilith came out and touched him lightly on the shoulder. He looked up, and the troubled expression which had been on his face vanished from it in an instant.

"I have got some news for you, Arthur," she said.

"Good or bad?" he asked. "But no news can be bad from your lips."

"I am not sure of that," she answered, with one of her strange smiles. "I do not think, however, that it can be very bad this time. It is only that Sir Harry and Lady Emmy are coming down here in a fortnight."

"To stay here?" asked Vane, anxiously.

"No, not to stay here; that might be awkward. It seems that the Normans have taken a large house some miles off. I do not know how many—I never know those things—but it's name is Colston Abbey. They have taken it for a few weeks, and are going to fill it and give a ball, and the Greys are to go there. Are you glad? Do you like Lady Emmy? Do you like her better than me?"

"I did like her much," replied Vane, hesitatingly; "whether I shall like her now is another question. I think I am rather afraid of her."

"Silly boy!" she said. "What should you be afraid of? What harm can she do to us?"

"I do not know that she can do any," replied Vane, "nor do I know why I should fear her, but I do."

"Nonsense," said Lilith, "you are weary and out of spirits, and full of fancies. I must look after you, I see!"

Lilith no doubt was right in ascribing to Vane an unstrung, nervous, fanciful state of mind, for during the fortnight which was to elapse before the arrival of the Greys, a fancy of a most gloomy nature began gradually to take possession of his mind. A new and terrible phase of feeling came to stir and confound yet more the troubled waters of his soul, waters troubled assuredly by no angel. With his love for Lilith a vague sense of fear slowly mixed itself, intangible and subtle at first as unexpressed thoughts, resolving itself by degrees into the effect produced partly by her general bearing and conduct, partly by those stories of Frank Gordon and others, whose

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hearts her enemies had accused her of deliberately breaking, which now, for the first time, thrust themselves on Vane's mind as being possibly true. But it was not only that the remembrance of these stories would start up and vex his mind, not only that he seemed to detect in her almost unvarying lightness of heart a delight in the success of her systematic deceit as well as a delight in his love for her and her influence over him. To such ideas as these he thought he could assign their due weight or want of weight; could even dismiss them as empty imaginations; but there was another idea which he could not so dismiss, an idea caught from certain chance words and looks of hers, an impression of some unknown evil hidden in her mind; some dark spot of iniquity lying out of his sight, perhaps out of hers also. Of this idea, try as he might, he could not rid himself. He attempted in vain to ascribe it to the shadow over his own heart casting some of its blackness upon hers; he attempted in vain to regard it as a diseased fancy born of wickedness, as foul weeds are of ill-kept soil; its power was too strong for him. He became like a man conscious of being pursued by a phantom whose form he discovers vaguely or not at all. It came to him with the first dawn of daylight, and pursued him in his dreams; at times it would overpower him, and make him shrink away from Lilith even while she smiled upon him; he found his only refuge from its horror in working hard at painting, at writing, at anything, so long as this dark fancy possessed his mind. One day he had been fashioning some verses to chase the phantom away, when Lilith came into the room where he sat, holding a kitten in her arms:—standing behind him she took the paper from his hand and read over its contents, which ran thus:

"The waters raged but yesternight,
  The wild wind raised a shrieking wail,
The clouds drove by in swift affright
  Before the fury of the gale.

To-day the sea lies smooth as glass,
  The storm-fiend's voice is heard no more;
The waves in gentle cadence pass,
  And melt upon the peaceful shore.

The joyous ripple of the wave
  Is like the sunny flowers that grow
Upon the summit of a grave,
  Yet cannot mask the death below.

The glad sea smiles in the soft light,
  The smile that can caress and kill,
For yonder wave with crest so white
  Bears a dead face that's whiter still."

"Clever boy!" she said. "But what is 'the smile that can caress and kill'?"

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"If you do not know I can hardly explain it to you," he replied.

"I think I do know the kind of thing that you mean. It is the sort of feeling that I have sometimes for my kitten—haven't I, Kitty?—or for anything that is soft and nice, and that I can caress. I would like to tighten my hold on its little neck, make it tighter and tighter yet until"——

As she spoke she suited action to word until the kitten cried out in pain and terror; but Lilith seemed not to hear it, she only wound her fingers closer round its throat, and Vane, looking at her, saw in her face so strange an expression of pleasure, that his fear for the kitten's life was merged in that indefinite fear of her which had before possessed him.

"Lilith," he said, gravely, "for heaven's sake, do not give way to such feelings."

"What feelings?" she asked, with one of her innocent smiles.

"I wish I knew. Surely you did not wish to kill your favourite kitten?"

"No. I only thought it felt so good to squeeze. I did not want to hurt it, poor little thing. Why should I?"

"Your looks belied you strangely, then," said Vane with a sigh. "See: it crouches away from you; it loves you no longer."

"Loves me no longer?" she repeated, angrily. "No; it is you who love me no longer. If you did you would never talk to me like this: you would never have accused me of cruelty: how can you do so?" She took up the kitten in her arms and fondled and caressed it until, forgetting with its short memory her past unkindness, it purred with responsive gratitude. "The kitten loves me as much as ever," she said, indignantly; "it is you who have ceased to love me."

She ran into another room as she spoke, and Vane, having hesitated for a moment, followed her and, kneeling at her feet, pleaded with voice and eyes for forgiveness. While he yet knelt, and she half-petulantly granted him the forgiveness he begged for so earnestly, the door suddenly opened, and a servant announced, "Sir Harry and Lady Emmeline Grey." Vane felt himself shudder from head to foot; it seemed to him that his presentiment with regard to Lady Emmy was fulfilled; he felt powerless to extricate himself from the dilemma in which he was placed; but Lilith, who had drawn away from him as soon as she heard the motion of the door handle, said, "Pray do not trouble yourself to look for it any longer. It is of no importance." Then she went on to Lady Emmy: "You see I am no less careless than I used to be; I have dropped my wool, and Mr. Vane was kindly looking for it. I am so glad to see you," she said, greeting them both warmly, while her eyes sparkled with secret glee at her successful stratagem. "How long do you intend to stay? A long time I hope. Falcon will be so delighted to hear that you

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have come. I will let him know at once." She rang the bell intending to give directions to a servant to inform Lord Falcon of the Greys' arrival, when Vane, glad of an excuse to get away for a moment and subdue the agitation which this incident had caused him, interposed, saying: "I will go and tell Falcon. I shall find him more quickly, and moreover I shall be glad to be the bearer of such good tidings as those of your arrival."

"How do you like this old house?" said Sir Harry to Lilith, whom Lady Emmy had eyed carefully, almost suspiciously, ever since she had entered the room. She had seemed also to shrink away from the other's advances; her manner had been more like Falcon's, less like her own than was her wont. One would have said that she took no extraordinary pains to conceal that distaste for Lilith which she had more than once expressed to Sir Harry. Indeed, she liked her no better now that she was Lady Falcon than she had when she was Miss Langenheim; on the contrary, the fact of seeing her for the first time established as her brother's wife seemed to recall with a new distinctness all the unpleasant impressions which she had formerly entertained with regard to her. Sir Harry, aware of the unfavourable light in which his wife regarded Lilith, had been afraid lest Lilith should also become aware of it, and out of the goodness of his heart had set the ball of conversation rolling as well as he could after Vane had quitted the room. But his fears were groundless, for Lilith was, or appeared to be, entirely unconscious of anything repellent in Lady Emmy's demeanour towards her, and she assumed all the softness of manner which she well knew how to assume, as she answered Sir Harry's question about the house as much to Lady Emmy as to him. "It is most interesting. I have always had a liking for old houses; and there is something peculiarly romantic about this house, and you know I was brought up to like romantic things. The only danger is of being dull, and we have avoided that most successfully."

"Ah!" said Lady Emmy in a voice almost as soft as Lilith's, but directing at her unseen a quick glance of such apprehension and dislike as only her love for her brother could have called into her kind eyes. "It must be a great pleasure and a great resource for you to have Arthur staying here."

"Is it not?" said Lilith with her happiest and most joyous expression.

Perhaps no one could observe another person more keenly than Lady Emmy did Lilith as she waited for this answer; but beneath its bright cheerfulness she could detect no touch of embarrassment or pain.

"But, of course," continued Lilith, "you know as well as I do how kind and thoughtful Falcon always is, and Mr. Vane's visit has been a pleasure to us both."

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"Vane is a very good fellow," said Sir Harry, "and a clever fellow too, and knows something about music, I believe. In fact, he knows a little of everything. I always think what a pity it is that he didn't take up one accomplishment and stick to it instead of devoting his talents to so many. But, then, if he had done that perhaps he wouldn't have been so popular."

Lilith looked at him with a pleasant smile, and said, "I believe you are right. Success—real success—in any branch of art probably requires a sacrifice of popularity; do you not think so?"

"Yes!" replied Lady Emmy, with some vehemence; "but who would not sacrifice popularity to purchase greatness?"

Lilith smiled to herself as she saw the repressed scorn and anger on Lady Emmy's face: she knew that she was thinking of her brother, and thinking that his wife did not appreciate his fine qualities. As she thought this her face caught something of her brother's expression; and Lilith, seeing it, admired her more than she had ever done before. So strangely mixed were the component parts of her character, that she had never valued Falcon's noble qualities so much as at this moment, when she was using an apparent contempt of them to wound his sister. She had, indeed, begun to say, and with sincerity, that she held real greatness far above the superficial merit of popularity, when she was interrupted by the entrance of Lord Falcon, with Vane. Lady Emmy embraced him with all the warmth which affection and anxiety can give, for she had been anxious about him ever since his marriage, and had come down to stay with the Normans more in order to satisfy herself of how things were going with her boy than with any other object. He responded to her greeting with the tenderness which he never displayed save to her and Lilith. "I am so glad you have come, dear Emmy," he said; "but it is in a kind of hermitage that you find us. You will be pleased to hear that the oratorio goes on well; for which I owe many thanks to Arthur. He has been invaluable to me—to us—both as a critic and a friend. Has he not, Lilith?"

Lilith signified assent without a trace of discomposure, with exactly the blending of friendship and courtesy which the occasion seemed to require, as she looked towards Arthur; but he, feeling that the weight of his secret trouble had never been heavier than at this moment stood with downcast eyes, and the hand which he was resting on a chair close to Lady Emmy trembled in spite of himself. She saw it and could not repress a kind of half sigh, which she hoped escaped observation, as she replied to Falcon,—

"You will break through your recluse habit, will you not, dear, to come to the ball at Colston Abbey? It is to be a costume ball, and, as there will be but few people, there will be plenty of room for the dances to take effect, which is not usually the case. You will come,

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will you not?" she said, forcing herself to address Lilith in a tone of kind invitation.

"Of course you will come," said Sir Harry; "one so seldom gets a chance of a pretty ball where there is room both to see and to dance, and the Normans are nice people. They take trouble to make things comfortable without bothering about what the world will say: I mean they think more of what the people who are there will say to it than what the people who are not will. I don't know if you see what I mean?" he said, feeling as if he had got into a slight confusion, and looking rather timidly round for encouragement.

"I quite see," said Vane, who had to some extent recovered his self-possession. "They care more for the real effect upon their guests than for the impressions of the outside world."

"Exactly so—exactly so," said Sir Harry, with his contented laugh, and added, half to himself, half to Lilith, "I said Arthur was a clever fellow."

"Would you not like to hear the organ, and some of Falcon's oratorio—Emmy?" asked Lilith, with a slight hesitation before she addressed her sister-in-law by name, which until now she had avoided doing. And perhaps with good reason, for Lady Emmy's brows contracted slightly, and something like a faint reflection of her brother's sternest expression came again into her face, as she replied, echoing the other's hesitation before she named her.

"Thank you—Lilith. I am afraid we must go back now: it is a long drive, and we shall be late if we stay longer. Harry, will you see if the carriage is ready?"

Lilith, with her prettiest air of insistance, accompanied Sir Harry on this errand, and Vane followed in her wake. Lady Emmy, left alone with her brother, laid both her hands on his arms, and looking up into his face with her sweet grey eyes, said, "Well, my boy?"

"Yes, dear," he answered, divining her thought; "I am as happy as the day is long."

"God keep you so!" she said, and they parted.

When she and Sir Harry got into the carriage, she leant back and crossed her hands over her eyes, as if to shut out some painful vision. Sir Harry, fancying that she had a headache, began to talk in a cheerful strain.

"Well, little Emmy," he said, "I hope you think better of Lilith—I was just going to call her Lilith Langenheim—than you did. She seems to have made Falcon wonderfully happy. And what an excellent idea it was having Arthur to stay there. I believe Lilith is a very good, nice little woman, but still you know she was always rather capricious and restless, and if she hadn't had somebody to amuse her she might have got bored with Falcon's music, though I believe she's thoroughly fond of him. And they seem to make such a plea-

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sant party, to enter into each other's thoughts and wishes—a kind of happy family, don't you think so? Nobody but Arthur could have answered the purpose so well."

Lady Emmy had removed her hands from her eyes, and sat pale, motionless, and miserable during this speech. Now she rested her head on her husband's shoulder, and said to him, "Harry, where are your eyes? Or is it—which God grant!—that mine are blinded by some vile prejudice? Yet I cannot think that it is so. Would that I could!"

"Dear little Emmy! what do you mean?" cried Sir Harry, unused to see her so moved, and becoming alarmed.

"I mean this. Did you hear Lilith say that she had dropped her wool when we came in? You heard that, but you did not see that there were none of the appliances for which wool is needed in the room. My woman's eyes saw it. Did you hear that she always spoke of Arthur as Mr. Vane? Did you see the gloom that overcast his face? did you see him tremble when Falcon thanked him for his kindness? Did you see the triumphant glance that she shot at him as he followed her out of the room, at me as I went away? Oh, me! I dare not speak out the horrible suspicions that come into my mind, and yet I cannot banish them," she added as she spoke; and Sir Harry, now really frightened, petted and soothed her as best he could.

"My dear child," he said, "you must be ill; you have always had a kind of craze about that poor little woman; and now you are over-tired and really hardly know what horrible things you are suggesting. Surely she may have dropped her wool in a room where she was not using it; and what is there in her speaking of Arthur as Mr. Vane? It seems to me very proper that she should; she is no near relation of his, nor he of Falcon, and she does not know us at all intimately yet. As for the look in her eyes, as I say, you have always been foolish about them. Do think, dear, of what you have said."

"I cannot help it," she answered; "I feel so certain—I always did from the first, but now doubly certain—that there is some horrible evil happening, or going to happen, to my boy, and I cannot bear it. I dread that woman, and I fear my dread is only too well-founded. God forbid that I should unjustly accuse her of wickedness—that I have not done, nor will I—but there is much harm that can be done without what the world recognises as wickedness. She has it in her power to destroy Falcon's happiness with a word or a look, and I fear—oh, I fear so much!—that she will abuse that power."

"Why should she?" he replied. "I grant you that in most cases there would be a strong temptation to her to flirt with a young man staying there alone with her and Falcon; and, for all I know, she might yield to it—not that I think she would. And if Falcon thought she was doing so, I dare say he'd be miserable about it; he's just the

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kind of man who would. But remember Arthur, who is a confirmed flirt, never flirted with her from the first. You must recollect noticing that yourself."

"My dear! my dear!" she said, "do you not see that it is exactly there that the danger lies?"

"No! Upon my soul I do not," said Sir Harry.

He had spoken at greater length and to more serious purpose than was his habit, and now he seemed as much hurt as his good-nature would allow him to be at the little effect which his words had produced. Lady Emmy seeing this, and grateful to him for his solicitude and attempts at comforting her, smiled at him through her tears, agreed with him that her fancies were, perhaps, the result of fatigue or illness, and dried her eyes, trying to appear cheerful, as women after great emotion can do, during the time of their return to Colston Abbey.

Chapter IX.

Lilith and Vane met alone in the breakfast-room at Falcontree Hall next morning. "Well, darling," she said as she came in, "where are all your fancies about Lady Emmy now? What harm has she done us?"

"None," he replied. "I do not believe she would willingly harm a living thing." Lilith pouted and tapped her foot impatiently on the ground, as was her wont when her humour was crossed. "But I feel a presentiment—call it a fancy, if you will"—continued Vane, "that through her and with her harm will come to us. There is a heaviness in the air, or in me: a sense of boding misfortune which I cannot shake off. Do not laugh at me."

"Laugh at you? No!" she said. "I am superstitious enough myself; but what can make you imagine such things about Lady Emmy? Find superstitious forebodings all over this house if you will—I believe there are plenty if we chose to hunt them out—but do not go out of it in such improbable directions to discover evil omens. Come, dear, and sit down to breakfast."

Lord Falcon presently entered, and the conversation turned upon the coming ball at Colston Abbey, to which it was decided that they should go. He said it would be a piece of gaiety for Lilith, as well as a relief for himself. He was happy in seeing his sister again, and a little harmless dissipation would save him from the chance of getting jaded with his musical work. "What dresses shall we go in?" he said. "We had better all adopt the same period, and thus secure at least one harmonious group." Several suggestions were made and rejected, when Falcon said, "Let us go in the dress of Charles the Second's period. It is supposed to be hackneyed, and for that reason probably no one else will adopt it. It is always picturesque, and Arthur shall send sketches up to the costumier."

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"Good heavens!" cried Vane. He was about to add, "Why, that is the costume of the picture in the organ-room," when something checked the words as they rose to his lips, and Lilith, casting a quick look at him, diverted the conversation immediately into some other channel. It was curious, that since the night on which she and Vane had met for the first time on the terrace, her interest in the picture had seemed to disappear; it had lost the extraordinary fascination which it had formerly possessed for her—or, rather, repulsion had taken the place of fascination; she avoided it as much as she used to seek it, and rarely spoke of it. When she went into the organ-room she scarcely looked at the picture, or if she did so, looked away again immediately. Vane, taking his cue from her in this, as he had done unfortunately in other things, avoided it also; and Falcon, pleased at first to find that she had ceased to trouble her head about it, had ended by never thinking of it himself, and had probably forgotten, when he suggested the dress of Charles the Second's reign for the costume ball, that that period had any association with the picture. When they got up from breakfast, Lilith said in Vane's ear, "I know what you were thinking of. Let us come and see once more if we can fathom the meaning of the woman's look in the picture." As he prepared to follow her, "No, do not come," she said, turning back; "do not look at it. Come out into the sunlight and forget it."

In accordance with Falcon's suggestion, dresses of the period which he had mentioned were ordered and sent down from London in time for the ball, which was to take place in a few days. In the interval Sir Harry appeared again at the Hall, but this time without his wife. He, worthy soul, had had it on his mind to discover, if he could, whether there were any grounds for his wife's suspicions as to a flirtation existing between Lilith and Vane—of more than a flirtation he entertained no idea—and had managed to ride over to the Hall alone, without letting Lady Emmy know of his intention. As he approached the house he saw Vane and Lilith sitting in a remote part of the terrace; and going to the door asked for Falcon, and was shown into the organ-room.

"How do you do, Harry? I am glad to see you," said Falcon. "I know you will not mind my attending to these keys while you talk. They have taken lately to ciphering—sounding on after my commands to them have ceased."

"Not at all; I like it," said Sir Harry; and then paused to collect his thoughts and wonder what he should say.

"It is fine to-day, is it not?" said the other presently, in an absent manner. "I have only just looked out on the terrace once."

"Yes," replied Sir Harry, "it is very fine; but it seems always to be fine here. I should say you have a very good time of it here

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altogether; and it was a good move opening the old house. I wonder nobody ever did it before."

"It has suited my purpose exactly," said Falcon.

"Just so—just so," said Sir Harry; and then, after another pause, in which he attempted, with no very brilliant success, to arrange some diplomatic query which should help him to a conclusion, continued, "You all seem to get on very well together;" and having said it, felt horribly ashamed of himself.

"Get on well?" repeated Falcon, looking up in some surprise. "Certainly we get on well. Why not? I have my music, and Arthur and Lilith were friends before my marriage."

"Of course—just so; friends before your marriage," said Sir Harry, feeling much confused and at the same time relieved. Then he hung aimlessly about for a few minutes, and finally said, "Well, I'll just go and look for Lilith in the garden, and then I must go back." As he went out of the room his eye was caught by the picture, which he stopped to look at. That is a queer picture you have there, Falcon," he said; "clever, but with something quaint about it. What is it?"

"It has a history of its own," replied Falcon, "which I believe Lilith can tell you better than I can. She was puzzled by it when we first came down, but I think she has solved whatever puzzled her by this time—or given up trying to do so."

Sir Harry made his way to where Vane and Lilith sat together on the terrace, and presently began upon the subject of the picture. "Oh!" said Lilith, in answer to his questions, "the peculiarity of that picture is that no one can quite make it out. There is a spell over it. I have been trying ever since I came here, and I have not quite succeeded yet. Will you try and break the spell? Spells are dangerous things to meddle with, are they not?" she said, turning to Vane.

"Indeed I believe they are," he replied, with an air of melancholy conviction which perhaps puzzled himself as much as it did Sir Harry, who soon afterwards took his leave and returned to inform Lady Emmy that he was certain her suspicions were unfounded, and that he had seen for himself that all was going well at the Hall. But she received his assurances with a doubtful shake of the head and a sigh.

In the time which elapsed between this visit of Sir Harry's and the ball at Colston Abbey, the heaviness and disquietude which Vane had described as hanging over himself, increased rather than diminished; and he had never felt the burden of his ill-spent days and the presciences of unknown evil press more hardly upon him than when coming down on the evening of the ball in costume, he found Lilith and Lord Falcon, also in costume, together in the organ-room, she standing under the picture, he dreamily playing soft melodies on the organ.

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As Vane joined Lilith, Falcon started slightly, while his eyes moved from them up to the picture. They made a striking group, those three in the old oak-panelled room, and might well have been some of its former occupants recalled to life. Falcon, with his grave handsome face, resembled one of the nobler men of that epoch, who looked sadly on at its frivolities and follies, wanting nothing but the power to check them. Vane's light complexion was well suited to the hanging boots and white ruffles of a courteous cavalier, while Lilith was like a portrait of some court beauty which had stepped out of its frame in all the frippery and coquetry of the time. A sort of perfume of Charles the Second's court, with its gay laughter and its wicked revels, and its mesh of intrigue, clung to her as she moved about the room, followed by the admiring gaze of Falcon, while Vane sat moodily in a corner playing with the hilt of his sword and looking upon the ground. Presently, a fancy seized Falcon, a fancy to him idle and harmless, to the others, or to Vane, at least, hideous, appalling in its mockery, charged with a fearful significance:

"Since we are assembled here in the costume of the picture," said Falcon, "let us make it a *tableau vivant!* here is the very scene of the actual event, if there is, indeed, any truth in the picture or the story, to which I for one have never given much credence; and the costumes could hardly be more correct than they are. Come, Arthur! come Lilith! You, I am sure, have studied the picture closely enough to play your part to perfection."

Every one of these words went like a stab to Vane's heart. It seemed to him the most diabolical mockery which could be devised that they two should stand up and assume in jest before Lord Falcon the parts which they were playing towards him in such horrible earnest; he felt as though it were an accumulation of evil upon evil, to go through such a ghastly pageant; and he shuddered silently in his corner as he heard the suggestion. But Lilith beckoned to him with her gayest smile to take his place.

As he assumed the required position, and sank to the ground to represent the dying man of the picture, a cry of surprise and horror escaped from him, which he thought he heard faintly echoed back from Falcon. The cause of this cry was the sight which he caught, as he fell, of Lilith's face, looking down upon him with so withering an expression of deadly passion, that the blood rushed back upon his heart, and he turned cold as he saw it. He read in her eyes—what, he knew not—but something, which he knew to be the foreshadowing of the vague horror which he had dreaded for so long. It was some shocking commingling of love and fury, of the wish to cherish and the longing to destroy, which he recognised as having seen hinted at in his dreams of her, if never in waking life.

Lilith, as this expression came into her face, and she saw the

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terror depicted in Vane's, laughed to herself her little purring laugh, for she knew that now she had fathomed the look in the picture's eyes.

Falcon, meanwhile, standing sword in hand, unnoticed by them, in the attitude which he had assumed for the purpose of the *tableau*, surprised the glances which passed between them. And as on a dark night the vague forms of trees and houses can scarcely be distinguished in the thick blackness, until the lightning flashes and shows for an instant every outline clear and sharp in its deadly blaze, so by the light of that one glance, Falcon saw suddenly the whole lurid landscape of their guilt, plain, in all its hideousness, before him. By its light he saw the dark view of the past illuminated with a blinding glare; he saw in a moment the truth of the warnings which he had received and neglected, the meaning of his sister's anxious looks and Sir Harry's visit; and in that moment he resolved to keep his terrible discovery from them at all costs. A thousand instances of careless words and deeds of Vane's and Lilith's, trivial to him then, and colourless, showed black and guilt-stained now to his new and awful power of vision, as they rushed swiftly through his mind. Every tone of her voice which he had loved, every pressure of the hand which he had interchanged with Vane, seemed to rise up to his memory and proclaim their falsehood. The agony of rage, and shame, and revenge, the fate which had waited so long to gather its full force broke upon him in an instant; and as the blow struck him he reeled before it and shook the sword in his hand with a frantic grasp. Yet when the others turned and saw him he was standing firm and unmoved as before, and not a note in his voice quivered, as he said with all his accustomed gravity of manner: "An excellent performance, indeed. Your cry, Arthur, added greatly to the effect, although it was scarcely legitimate in a *tableau vivant*. Had we but moonlight here instead of candles, the representation would be perfect. And now, it is time to start."

On the way to the ball neither Falcon nor Vane spoke much, but Lilith talked and laughed with her most fascinating joyousness. As they entered the ball-room, which was filled with a gay and motley crowd of mediæval knights and Watteau shepherdesses, Nights and Mornings, and brilliant uniforms, the same thought seemed to strike them all, as Lilith turned to Falcon with a questioning look, and Vane cast his eyes round the room with a scared expression. "Yes," said Falcon, gravely, "it was at Mrs. Norman's ball that we first met, and at her ball we meet again now. Let us celebrate the happy occasion by dancing this waltz together."

As they swept round the room, many glances were directed at them, many remarks were made upon how well her light grace matched his graver courtesy; what a happy pair they seemed!

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"I am so glad to see your brother again," said Miss Norman to Lady Emmy; "we were always great friends, as you know; and I am so pleased that his marriage has turned out so well: many people prophesied badly of it, but I always hoped it would prove happy. He looks a little pale and careworn, I am afraid, though; I suppose he has been working too hard at his music, he always did."

"He did," said Lady Emmy, in a tone, the sadness of which she could not entirely control; "but in that he always found his reward."

Miss Norman looked a little surprised, and might have expressed her surprise, but was claimed at that moment by a partner. Vane meanwhile had disappeared in the crowd, from which he presently emerged to dance with Lilith. Ordinarily he was an excellent dancer, and his step went well with hers, but to-night the heaviness of his heart seemed to have communicated itself to his limbs; his feet refused to keep time to the music. At last he stumbled, and when Lilith reproached him with his awkwardness, he replied, "I cannot help it; I cannot shake off the gloom which has come over me. All this bright music jars upon my ears; these brilliant lights are more bitter to me than the thickest darkness, and in every careless laugh I seem to hear a death-knell. Do not let me spoil your enjoyment, dear. I will plead a strained ankle, and go to play piquet with Sir Harry, who does not care for dancing."

"Poor boy!" she said, with a half sympathetic, half contemptuous accent, and was soon afterwards whirling round the room with another partner.

Lady Emmy was sitting out a dance with her brother in a remote corner of the conservatory, shadowed by tropical leaves. After a few trivial observations she laid her hand tenderly on his arm, and looking at him with her soft, steady gaze, said, "Falcon, dear, I think you know how much I love you."

"I think I do," he replied with a half sigh.

"Then let my love," she said, "the love which makes me think of you always with anxious care, as it did when you were a sweet little boy with such grave, thoughtful eyes, and with no one but me to pet and cherish you, and teach your hands to play the music that you delighted in—let that love be my excuse if I offend you in anything that I say now."

Falcon's brows contracted slightly, and his mouth grew set, but he answered, "Dear, you cannot offend me."

"I do not know how to speak what is in my mind," she said, clasping his arm a little tighter; "it is very difficult, the more because it is so long since I have seen you and talked to you like this. But somehow it must be said." She buried her face an instant in her hands, and then lifting it, she said, "I cannot help feeling uneasy about Lilith, and I cannot rest till I have told you so. There!

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I have said it—it has cost me much pain and fear to say. Are you angry? Do not look away from me—do not take away your arm." He moved back his arm, which he had taken away at the mention of Lilith's name, and took Lady Emmy's hand in his, but he did not turn his face to her as he answered, "I cannot be angry with you; least of all when I know well that your words spring from your love for me; but give me more proof of that love, I beg you, by never saying such words again. I know well what you—I will not say suspect—but fear. Let me assure you, once and for all, that any fear which you may entertain of my wife doing anything even in the merest thoughtlessness which could make me uneasy will be entirely without cause. I know her thoroughly." As he said this he clasped his sister's hand with a sudden pressure. "I have never blamed you," he went on, "for the slight prejudice which I knew you always entertained against her; it was but natural. And I repeat, so far from being angry, I am grateful, as ever, for your thoughtfulness and your love." He turned his face to her as he concluded, and it appeared to her as if all the lines on it had suddenly deepened, but this might have been caused by the shadows cast from the large tropical leaves under which they sat. He bent and kissed her once tenderly, and then took her back to the ball-room. Perhaps even the moment at which the knowledge of his wife's betrayal had flashed upon him did not cause more pain to every fibre of Falcon's nature than did the telling of this deliberate falsehood to his sister. The one had been a sharp, sudden, overmastering anguish; the other was an effort for which he had prepared himself, and which he had determined to carry through. He was one who suffered in silence and alone.

Chapter X.

When the three returned to Falcontree Hall the moon was shining calm and bright on the sea, chequering the avenue with the shadows of leaves, casting dark shades on the terrace in front of the house. A common impulse seemed to guide their steps to the organ-room.

"You seem out of spirits, Arthur," said Falcon, as they sat down. "I only saw you dance once, and that was with Lilith."

"Yes," answered Vane, absently; "she was kind enough to promise me an early dance."

"And she kept her promise?" asked Falcon, with a marked emphasis.

"I am not in the habit of breaking my promises," said Lilith, petulantly.

"Are you not?" said Falcon. "Do you only break hearts, then?"

There was something strange in his manner, but Lilith appeared

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not to notice it, and replied carelessly, "I do not think I can have broken any to-night; they were all too fat and stupid."

Falcon looked at her with a weary smile, and sat down to the organ.

"Have you got the keys into order yet, Cecil? You will have finished the first part of your oratorio soon, will you not?" said Lilith.

"In a day or two, no doubt," he replied. "I shall be both glad and sorry when I have got through it. Sorry because it must be the signal for our breaking up; and we have been such a happy, harmonious party, have we not?" he said, without varying the usual calm inflection of his voice, but looking from one to the other with an undisguised scorn, which was not perceived by Vane, whose eyes were cast upon the ground, and was unnoticed by Lilith. "But we may break up sooner even than in a day or two," added Falcon, in a tone so different from his ordinary one as to be almost brutal.

Lilith shrugged her shoulders, and as Falcon began to play, crossed over to Vane, who had rather kept apart from her since their return, and said, in her caressing voice, "Come out and see the moonlight."

He muttered, "Not to-night," without looking up.

Then bending down, she said in his ear, "Come, darling," and he rose with slow, reluctant steps, and followed her. They passed from the organ-room to the entrance hall, and thence on to the terrace by the open door, through which the broad beams of moonlight coming in, seemed to meet the issuing flood of music and mingle with it. Then they wandered into the woods behind the house, wandered farther and farther into their recesses, and so wandering strayed deeper and deeper into the mazes of love. It seemed to Vane that as the thick canopy of leaves and branches obscured their sight, even so did the mist of passion enwrap and blind their souls. It wreathed itself round them and clung to them, until it blotted out all remembrance. The accidents of circumstance vanished, were swallowed up in the fact of their love. The right of love gave them to each other, and in face of that right all others were forgotten. For such forgetfulness there comes a heavy punishment.

"Why did you bring me out to-night, Lilith?" cried Vane, as returning from the woods they neared the terrace wall once more.

"Why? Arthur! what a question! because I love to have you here all to myself for a little. I have scarcely seen you all day. Look how bright the moon shines on us as we stand! I love the moonlight."

"Bright!" said he; "yes, with an unhallowed light. There is nothing good—nothing human in it. She hangs up there in the sky, the spectre of a dead world, and her light is the light of corruption which

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shines from death. Ah, Lilith! the moonlight has been a bad light for us, I fear."

"Bad!" she cried, moving away from him. "You call it bad and say it is not human when I tell you that I love it. Bad! you call it bad when it has shone for us on so many happy nights, when it was by this light that I first heard you tell your love for me! Arthur! have you forgotten so soon? Have you wearied of me so soon?"

"Wearied of you?" he cried; "my fairy—my queen! How can you speak so? Do you not know by this time that I can never weary of you so long as body and soul cling together? That your presence is as the breath of my life?"

He drew her close to him within his grasp. "Hark! What is it that Falcon is playing?" he said presently, bending his head away from her towards the door. "Good God! it is Bach's Judas music!"

He shuddered and dropped his head upon his breast as he spoke; but she, clinging closer yet to him, looked up in his eyes as she said, "Why do you look like that, my darling? Do not think of horrible things. Think only of me, who love you, who am here close to you." They stood a few moments with arms interlocked in the cold moonlight, until she too, shuddering, cried, "Ah! what is that?" as a horrible discord broke like angry thunder from the keys, and bore its harshness through the open door. Then, turning, they saw Falcon standing behind them with his sword drawn in his hand, tall and stately, like an avenging spirit, while still the organ pealed on in jarring dissonance.

"Ah!" cried Falcon, with a hard, bitter laugh; "the picture is complete at last!" and turned sternly on Vane.

Vane laid his hand on his sword, and had just drawn it from the scabbard when his eye fell upon Lilith, who had broken away from him at the first sound of her husband's voice. She stood with her hands stretched towards him. The attitude, the place, the light, were the same as they had been on the evening when first he told his love to her, but on her face now was a look which unnerved his arm and made him drop his sword to his side. It was the look of which he had so many times seen the subtle indications, the same look which she had worn when they rehearsed the scene of the picture, but intensified, now that the picture was indeed complete, to a tenfold horror of tigerish joy and ruthless craving for destruction. Many a time Vane had longed to tear off his false mask of friendship and meet Falcon face to face and sword to sword, but now he quailed before the look in Lilith's eyes, and retreated cowering as Falcon advanced upon him, until, still gazing at her in horrible fascination, he struck his foot against the base of the low wall which separated the terrace from the cliff, and, stumbling backwards across it, hung helpless over the cliff. Falcon stretched out a hand to save him; but clutching wildly at

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the coping of the wall, he missed it and went headlong down; while the organ gave one last exhausted wail of unearthly discord, as though evil spirits had seized upon the pipes and keys. At the same moment Lilith with a cry of terror fell motionless on the ground.

An instant Falcon looked at her, and then going quickly back to the house, rung up the servants. "Send Lady Falcon's people to her at once," he said; "she has fainted on the terrace. Mr. Vane has had a terrible accident. That wall! I should have had it heightened long ago. And bring lanterns quickly down the cliff path with me."

The servants assembled in hurried confusion; Mrs. Thornton, the housekeeper, finding time to say in the ear of old Gillie, the gardener, as they went off, he to bear a light down the cliff, she to attend to Lilith, "What have we said many a time, Mr. Gillie? that harm would come of opening a house marked out with a curse. And so, even as we said it, it has come true now. Poor Mr. Vane! so young and so pleasant in his ways. I do hope as you may find him alive."

The party of servants, headed by Falcon, descended the rugged path in the cliff carefully and cautiously, holding their lanterns up and peering here and there at every turn to see if they could find what they sought; making a thin line of sharp yellow light among the dark foliage, while the moon cast a grey indistinct haze around them. Right down to the foot of the cliff they threaded their slow, anxious way, coming every now and then upon traces left in the bushes by Vane's feet and hands as he had clutched and torn at the branches in his headlong descent. Close above the slope of the cliff to the beach, resting on a ledge of barren rock, they found his body bruised, mangled, and lifeless. Falcon walked silently back with them as they bore the corpse to the hall, and laid it in one of the large rooms. Then he went to look for Lilith, whom he found in her own room, crouched in a corner, pale and trembling. As he entered, she tottered towards him with a faltering heavy step, most unlike her usual light run, and falling at his feet she caught his knees with her hands, and seeing the stern look on his face, cried, in broken accents, "Falcon! Cecil! pity me! oh, pity me!"

"Pity!" he repeated, looking down at her with such intolerable scorn that she dropped her head and hands as if he had struck her. "Pity! What should you know of pity? What pity had you for me when you deceived me with your soft looks and wiles? What thought of pity had you when you took my heart in your hands, the heart I gave you so trustingly, and crushed it in your weak, deadly grasp? What did you know of pity when you took his life into your hold and murdered him?"

She gave a low wail of agony and crouched yet lower to the ground.

"He will never look for your smile, never listen for your voice

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again. He has paid for your crime and his with his life. And shall no payment be exacted from you?"

She trembled and shrank away from him.

"No, do not fear; I am not going to kill you; for such inhuman devilry as yours what human punishment can avail? I have decided on your future so far as I am concerned with it. To-morrow you will go back to your father. When you are once in his keeping, you and I shall be as strangers on the earth. Of the reasons for this the world will know nothing. You have blasted my life, but you shall not tarnish my name. You hear my voice for the last time now, and with my last words I bid you go and learn what pity is."

She lifted her head, and made a gesture as though to catch at his hand, but he turned from her in scorn and strode out of the room.

Falcon spent the remainder of the morning in arranging affairs according to the plan which he had found determination to conceive between Vane's fall and the recovery of his body. He wrote to Lady Emmy, telling her that Vane had fallen while they were all three walking on the terrace, blaming himself for the terrible fate which had overtaken him, in that he had not looked earlier to the dangerous lowness of the wall; announcing that Lilith was so upset by the accident, of which she had been an eye-witness, that he should send her back at once to London, where her father now was, out of sight of the painful associations of Falcontree Hall. He wrote to Mr. Langenheim, briefly detailing the facts which had occurred without any comment. This letter cost him much to write. Mr. Langenheim received it a day before Lilith arrived, and part of that day he spent in a mad outburst of fury and despair, which left him only sense enough to lock his door and struggle with himself alone until the storm of his passion was exhausted and had subsided from mere want of force to carry it on. He knew Lord Falcon so well, by the sympathy which exists between strong natures, that he could not doubt the truth of what was told to him. Therefore he accepted it as a fact at once; but the anguish in which he writhed helpless, as Prometheus may have writhed, under the knowledge of his daughter's dishonour, was none the less for that.

When his first access of rage and horror was subdued, he fell into a kind of lethargy, which was upon him when Lilith arrived and fell miserably at his feet, having nowhere else to fling herself, so that he put his hand upon her head with a few broken words of sorrow, as though she had been the little child whom he remembered coming to him penitent from some naughty prank. This lethargy grew upon him day by day, while she stayed with him, as she did to the end of his life. By slow degrees he grew feebler and feebler in his powers of mind and body, until at last he used to sit a broken wreck, with the mouth that had once been so firm weak and drooping—with the eyes

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that had been full of fire dim and wandering, dabbling a dry brush on an empty canvas, and appealing to imagined crowds of admirers whether his work was not the best that he had ever done. "Beautiful is it not?" he would say. "A painter knows his own skill, and this, I tell you, is beautiful. Full of grace and full of power, and all taken from my daughter; is it not, Lilith? Will not Lord Falcon like it? Vane used to say it was such a good portrait." And Lilith gave assent to all his questions, fulfilling thus that punishment which Falcon had said no human power could inflict upon her.

On the same day during which she arrived at her father's house Vane's funeral took place. Falcon, pale and with dark circles beneath his eyes, but upright and firm in his gait as before, attended it as chief mourner. The villagers followed him, all mourning for the death of the young man whom they had liked, but yet with a latent unacknowledged satisfaction in their hearts at the fulfilment of the evil prophecies which they had made as to the re-opening of the Hall. After that he went up to London, and writing to his sister that he was ordered abroad for the sake of his health, which he had unconsciously injured by over-work at music, and that, much to his regret, he was obliged to leave his wife behind to take care of her father, for the present he left England. Lady Emmy is still anxiously awaiting the time when she shall embrace her boy again; if that time ever comes, it will not be at Falcontree Hall, which is shut up once more with a seal on the door of the organ-room. Meanwhile Sir Harry is loud in praise of Lilith's devotion to her failing father.

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The Universality of Superstitions connected with Sneezing.*

"Friend Morris, do not think yourself alone
Of all men happy. Shall not love to me,
As in the Latin song I learned at school,
Sneeze out a full 'God bless you' right and left?"

TENNYSON'S *Edwin Morris.*

EVERYTHING bearing on the subject of the unity of origin of our race is of peculiar importance and interest at a time like this, when science seems to be inclined to attribute the points of identity which seem to connect all the races of men together to accident or to the natural and inevitable results of the same influences and necessities upon all men in all ages.

The superstition I have selected, the habit of saying "God bless you!" when a person sneezes, is so absurd that no one can pretend that nature could have suggested it to all men at all times and in all countries, nor can it be assumed (even if such a thing were possible) that all nations, in Europe, Asia, Polynesia, and America, can have borrowed from one another a custom that has apparently so little to recommend it to the common apprehensions of men. Ridiculous as it may appear, we should remember that nothing which carries us back beyond the limits of history, and gives us a clue to the religious ideas and the social customs of prehistoric man, can be considered unimportant.

To use the words of Bunsen, "Above all we should never contemn nor overlook even the most seemingly trivial and unpromising object within the range of primitive monumental history."

Homer carries back this superstition to Olympus and to the gods, who make the vaults of heaven ring by invoking Jupiter when one of their number indulges in the ominous act of sneezing. The Jews suppose that originally a sneeze was fatal, and that at the inter-

* This article contains the substance of a paper written in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1863 to amuse some friends, and printed for private circulation only. A dozen copies or so were sent to England, and the paper was forgotten by the writer. On returning to England after ten years' absence, he was surprised to find that it had attracted a good deal of attention, and that it had been quoted from by Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Tyler, and others. At the request of his friends, it is now reproduced with additions, in the hope that it may prove amusing and of interest to the readers of TEMPLE BAR.

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cession of Jacob the penalty of death attached to it was abolished, and that henceforth it could be indulged in without proving mortal.

The recollection, however, of the primeval terrors of a sneeze still survive, and the Jews still ejaculate "*Tobim Chaiim!*" (a long life to you!) when a friend indulges in a sneeze.

The Greeks, unable to account for the superstition, traced it to the first sign of life in the clay which Prometheus fashioned into human form. Aristotle has devoted one of his Problems to the question why the custom of invoking *Jupiter Soter* was indulged in as a safeguard against the dangers of a sneeze, and tells us that his countrymen regarded a sneeze as sacred. Pliny has included among his Problems, *Cur sternutantes salutantur.* Catullus mentions the custom. Sir Thomas Brown, in his 'Vulgar Errors,' gives numerous quotations from classical authors as to the universality among the Greeks and Romans of this singular superstition. Themistocles found in a sneeze to the right a presage of victory over Xerxes. A sneeze to the left was regarded as unlucky. Sir Thomas Brown gives a quaint version of a Greek epigram on a man who had such a long nose that he could not hear himself sneeze. This translation was evidently not written by Milton:—

> "He sneezing calls not Jove, for why? He hears
> Himself not sneeze, the sound's so far from's ears."

Tiberius, who, though a sceptic, was profoundly superstitious, rigidly practised and enforced the observance of this custom.

The very general belief that the custom took its rise in one of the symptoms of the Plague in Italy in the days of Gregory the Great is therefore effectually disposed of. To this day, in Ireland and in parts of Scotland, the custom prevails. My housekeeper, a Devonshire woman, tells me it is still observed by the peasantry in that county. During the past century it was considered a gross breach of propriety not to salute a person on his sneezing. A friend of mine has told me that his father, as a little boy, was presented to the Pope, and was promised on his next visit, two days subsequently, a medal blessed by his Holiness. He and his father were present when the cardinals were assembled together. He happened to sneeze, when, to his surprise and delight, their eminences rose and bowed to him. The result was so agreeable that he extemporized several sneezes which were similarly honoured. His father was so mortified at the practical joke that he refused to present his son again to the Pope, and the little fellow therefore paid dearly for his amusement, and lost the intended present from his Holiness. Not very long ago an Englishwoman, travelling in Italy, who had heard a married lady friend who sneezed saluted by those present, not understanding Italian, or the precise meaning of the phrase used, subsequently astounded a bishop who sneezed near her, by the courteous wish *Figlio maschio!* (May it be a boy!)

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So universal is this superstition, that it may be questioned if there is any country in the world where traces of it cannot be found. Speke and Grant, among some of the savages of Equatorial Africa, could discover no traces of any religious ideas, except in the custom of uttering an Arabic ejaculation or prayer when a person sneezed.

Even among the isolated races of America the same superstition is to be met with. De Soto, the discoverer of Florida, noticed that when a Sachem sneezed the savages around him bowed down, and prayed to the Sun to save him. The same superstition extends also throughout the Polynesian and Melanesian Islands. In New Zealand the priest is guided by a sneeze in giving a name to an infant. He repeats name after name until the child sneezes, and the name then being pronounced is selected as that which Heaven has appointed for the young savage.

We find in the adventures of Mariner in the Tonga Islands, a group near the Fiji Islands, a second edition of what happened almost three thousand years ago to Xenophon and the "immortal ten thousand." Xenophon tells us in his 'Anabasis' that when the Greeks were about to commence their celebrated retreat after the death of Cyrus the Younger, and just as Xenophon was addressing them with these words, "We have many reasons to hope for *preservation*," a soldier unfortunately sneezed, upon which the whole army invoked Jupiter the *Preserver;* Xenophon, proceeding on, said, "Since at the mention of your preservation Jupiter has sent this omen," &c.—an ingenious turn, by which he converted an evil into a good omen.

I ought here to mention that in all ages, and in Hindostan as well as in Greece, it has been always considered an unlucky omen for any one to sneeze at the commencement of an undertaking. The existence of this belief among the Hindoos is referred to by Lutfullah in his Memoirs, p. 62, "A sneeze in an opposite direction will prevent a man from going to any place, or commencing any undertaking."

Mariner tells us that when Finow, a Chief in the Tonga Islands, was about to proceed on a warlike expedition, some one sneezed. Instead of showing the ready wit of Xenophon, the Chief, regarding it as an ill omen from the gods, defied them to do their worst.

Mariner himself almost lost his life from sneezing when Finow and his followers were about to commence a religious ceremony. "Immediately every one present threw down his club, for who would proceed on so important an expedition after so dire an omen! Finow's eyes flashed with the fire of rage. Directing them full on Mr. Mariner, he cursed him with the most bitter curse, 'Strike your God!'" In a note it is stated, "To sneeze at the moment of setting out on an expedition argues, in their opinion, the most fatal result."

The Thugs had a peculiar reverence for a sneeze. This detestable secret society is a warning to us as to the excesses to which even

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among educated persons perverted religious zeal, when blinded by superstition, may carry men when they bid good-bye to reason and to their judgment, and yield an implicit obedience to blind faith. They were, in one aspect, the most religious people the world has ever seen. The bloody goddess whom they served guided them hourly by signs, omens, and miracles, which they obeyed implicitly, even at the cost of their lives. At her bidding they consecrated their whole existence to a crusade against society and against human life. They believed in infallibility, and infallibility spoke from Heaven to them in signs and omens. One of these was a sneeze. Should the unhappy victim on awaking with the fatal cord around his neck happen to sneeze, his life was safe. The victim was regarded as sacred. The goddess had spoken.

The North American Indians, the natives of the Indian Archipelago, as well as the Polynesians, believe not only in the existence of some supreme and beneficent power, but also in the existence of inferior spiritual beings, or little gods, strongly resembling the fairies of Northern Europe. They also believe that all nature had a soul as well as man, and that the soul is peculiarly liable to the agency of spiritual beings. Thus the "Medicine Man" of the North American races is always a necromancer. His patient is not affected by natural, but by supernatural causes, only to be removed by countercharms. The "Medicine Man" works himself into a singular state, sometimes ending in convulsions; he then becomes inspired, and proceeds, with certain ceremonies, *to bring back* the patient's *soul*, or to expel the evil spirit.

The same belief and practice are observable among the savages of Borneo and of Central Africa. Among these simple and primitive races there is a belief that man has a double form, the one corporeal and the other spiritual, and that even in life the spirit or soul and the body are not necessarily united, but that sickness or evil spirits may deprive the body of its spiritual companion. The belief among the Jews as to idiots or insane persons being "possessed of evil spirits," may be connected with these ideas. It is remarkable that sickness and death are, in the Arctic regions, in Australia, and in Central Africa, attributed by the natives to the influence of spirits who have been employed by enemies to injure them. Thus among the Arctic Loucheux, whenever a person dies, his relatives kill some one belonging to a neighbouring tribe. In Australia exactly the same thing occurs, the natives fancying that some one has by supernatural means stolen the "kidney fat" of the deceased. They accordingly knock on the head a native of another tribe, and take from him his kidney fat while he is still alive.*

* See Sir John Richardson's 'Arctic Expedition in Search of Sir John Franklin,' chap. 12. See also 'Report on the Aborigines, by the Committee of the Legislative Council of Victoria—Session 1858–9.'

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The belief in Scotland and in Equatorial Africa is found to be almost precisely identical respecting there being *ghosts even of the living*, who are exceedingly troublesome and pugnacious.

In Polynesia, not only men, but also inanimate objects, are supposed to be liable to lose their spirits, or soul.

The little gods sometimes steal the souls or shadows of those articles to which they take a fancy. (See 'Westminster Review' for April, 1862.) There is a Polynesian legend, "in which they (the little gods) carry off the shadows of Ter Kanawa's jewels, leaving the costly substances behind them, the souls of the fairies being quite contented with the shadows alone."

It is stated that there is an instance among the Irish emigrants in the City of New York of a child having been burned to death by its parents under the impression that it was only a "changeling," or a "fairy child."

Colonel Tydd, late of the 76th Regiment, tells me that when he was stationed in Ireland, many years ago, a father and mother of the name of Mahoney were tried for murder for having boiled their child under a similar impression. The poor little fellow was a delicate child, whom nothing could apparently restore to health. A fairy mother had evidently stolen their healthy infant, and had substituted her own starveling in its place. To force her to restore their property to them, they put a pot of water on the fire, and when it was boiling they immersed the unfortunate child, which was some four or five years of age, in the scalding water. In vain his screams were heard as he cried out, "I'm Johnny Mahoney! I'm the rale Johnny Mahoney! I'm not the fairy's child!" But the fairy mother did not listen to the cries of her offspring, nor come to its rescue by bringing back the real Johnny Mahoney, and the parents were therefore arrested for murder, and were tried for the crime they had unconsciously committed.

But among the Celtic race the fairies did not confine their depredations to the dairy or the cradle. Even grown-up persons were liable to be spirited away by them. It is evident that they have inherited from primeval ages a belief that not only disease, but also death itself is the effect of supernatural agency. With civilised man the immortality of the soul may sometimes be a stumbling-block. To primeval man the mortality of the body was an incredible fact. The mystery of death was too profound to be believed in.

Indignatur se mortalem esse creatum.

Hence the perishing corpse was only a worthless substitute for the living, who had been carried away by "the good people." Wylde, in his interesting little work on Irish superstitions (p. 121), says: "The fairies, or 'good people,' are looked upon as the great agents and

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prime movers in the death of infants and young people; and even yet in the islands of the extreme West, except from sheer old age, or some very ostensible cause, no one is believed *to die all out.*" He goes on to say that even decomposition will not convince them that the person is dead. "Sure he has got a blast, and is with the faeries!" So rooted is this belief, that food of different sorts is brought for weeks by the friends of the deceased to the rath or fort where he is supposed to be living with the fairies.

Hence we find the belief still lingering that King Arthur is not dead, but is sleeping on the Eildon Hills, from which he will yet return—a superstition still lingering respecting him in Europe. In Southern Europe, Barbarossa only sleeps, and will yet awake, and be once more the terror of the world. The tale of the 'Seven Sleepers,' and similar other superstitions, are traceable to the same source.

This being the case, we can now form some conjecture as to the peculiar dread attached to sneezing. There can be no doubt that the fairies were originally the same as the ancestral spirits whom the Kaffirs believe enter into a man when he yawns or sneezes. Among the Celtic race it seems that their influence did not extend only to inspiring the person affected. It did more; it rendered him liable to be converted into a fairy man, or into a senseless, perishing corpse. Callaway, in his interesting work on the 'Religious System of the Amazulu' (Part I. p. 64), states that as a Kaffir "believes that at the time of sneezing the spirit of his house is in some special proximity to him, he believes it to be a time peculiarly favourable to prayer, and that whatever he asks for will be given. Hence he may say, *Bakwiti in komo!* (Spirits of our people, give me cattle!) or, *Bakwiti abantwana!*" (Spirits of our people, give me children!)

Yawning or sneezing is a sign that Itongo, the ancestral spirits, are about to enter and inspire the person affected. "He shows that he is about to be a diviner by yawning again and again. And men say: 'No; truly it seems as if this man were about to be possessed of a spirit!' It seems, however, that a convenient 'aid to devotion' is employed.

"This is also apparent from his being very fond of snuff; not allowing any long time to pass without taking some. And people begin to see that he has had what is good for him."*

It is evident that the negro races of Africa regard the act of sneezing with even greater dread than the Kaffirs, and, like them, believe it to indicate the influence of "ancestral spirits." They, like the Kaffirs and other races in Ceylon, India, and other portions of the globe, believe that the spirits of the dead assume the form of snakes, the undoubted source of "serpent-worship." The abode of the dead is

* Callaway's 'Divination among the Zulus,' p. 262.

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"the snake world" of the Cingalese. The Priestess of Apollo at Delphi was simply an "*obi-woman.*" She was inspired by a serpent called *Ob*. Now *Ob* means in Yoruba an *ancestor*. The temples of Central Africa are called *Oboni* (houses of the dead). An *Obi* man is therefore literally a *necromancer* (one who prophesies by aid of the dead).

So deeply-rooted is the superstition on the subject of sneezing in negro races, that Christianity has not been able to weaken it among their descendants in the United States. A lady, who had much to do with schools for blacks, surprised at the fact that she had never heard a black child sneeze, or at least give a thorough sneeze, came to the conclusion that the blacks are physically incapable of sneezing. The readers of this article can now supply a very different solution. The negroes evidently train their children from the cradle never to indulge in the ominous act of sneezing, and probably teach them never to allude to a subject which is connected with that mysterious influence of the dreaded *Obi*, which haunts the African from his infancy to the grave. I have frequently tried to question the blacks as to the *Obi*, but the very word had a terror for them, and was sufficient to reduce a laughing, chattering group to silence.

The Scandinavian and Celtic races attributed, however, even more serious influences to the agency of the spirits. A sneeze or yawn was enough to convert a person into a fairy man. Thus the Icelandic legend quoted by Callaway makes the female troll, who had assumed the form of a beautiful queen, say,

"When I yawn, I am a neat and tiny maiden; when I yawn a half yawn, then I am as a half troll; when I yawn a whole yawn, then I am as a whole troll."

This being, then, so wide-spread a superstition, regarding the influence of fairies or subordinate deities, can we in any way obtain from it a clue to the habit of saying "God bless you!" to a person who sneezes? Does the invocation of the Deity protect the person who sneezes from the influence of the fairies?

This I believe can be conclusively established by the traditions and superstitions of the Celtic race.

I need hardly refer to the mysterious protection which the name of the Deity is supposed to afford against the agency of evil spirits. There is, however, a well-known story, which will illustrate the belief of the Celtic race as to the effect which the habit of saying "God bless you!" has upon the fairies.

Pat once went to sleep at a place frequented by the fairies; and in his sleep was carried down to their palace. He was about to drink some of their ale, which would have for ever prevented his return, when fortunately one of the fairies happened to sneeze, upon which Pat, in a courteous mood, exclaimed very innocently, "God bless your honour!"

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Wonderful was the effect of thus invoking the name of the Deity in their presence. With terrible imprecations, and in great dismay, the fairies fled away, and Pat once more woke upon earth.

I could cite many such stories to prove the fact, that the Celtic race believe that, from Satan down to the mildest form of evil spirits, the name of the Deity has the effect of rendering them, for the time, powerless to do harm.

Can we then find any clue to the question why we should wish to keep off fairies and evil spirits when a man sneezes? I have discovered the explanation in the superstitions of the Highlanders. The following tradition as to a Highland Chief's family in Perthshire, related to me by the Rev. Dr. Robertson, a native of that county, shows that when a person sneezes, he is supposed to be *liable to be stolen by the fairies*, unless protected by some one invoking the name of the Deity.

Several centuries ago, an ancestor of the present Chief was engaged to be married to a young lady in France, who, he learned, had grown fickle, and was about to be married to a rival. In great distress, the Chief applied for aid to the King of the Fairies, who offered him a fairy horse, mounted on which he accompanied his Majesty to France. When they arrived at the house of the bride, the wedding was just commencing. The King of the Fairies, unseen by the guests, entered, and seeing the bride for a moment withdraw into a room alone, he followed her. Just then she sneezed—there was no one present to say "God bless you!" and in a moment the fairy had stolen the bride. whom he carried in triumph over to the Highlands, where she married the chieftain, and became the happy mother of a long line of illustrious Macs. It is needless to add that his rival, the unhappy Frenchman, unconsciously married "*a fairy woman.*"

American ethnologists point to the early monuments of Egypt for one of their strongest proofs in support of their views, as we there find the negro type represented as precisely similar to what it now is; and they endeavour to convince the world that all the varieties of man sprang from different "centres of creation," that the American man, Australian man, Arctic man, African man, all are indigenous to the countries which they now inhabit.

It would certainly be an amusing, if not a most profitable task to refute the speculations of these theorists by arguments derived from sneezing.

Before they can expect us to accept their conclusions, let them answer the question, How did all men, in all countries, arrive at the same singular conclusion as to the mysterious dangers attendant on a sneeze, if this belief was not inherited from a common source?

R. G. HALIBURTON.

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Patricia Kemball.

Chapter XL.

FREE TO PLEAD.

Mr. Hamley did the thing handsomely. If the Countess of Dovedale herself had died there could not have been a more splendid show of grief; perhaps there would not have been one so splendid. The shops put up their mourning shutters, and all the blinds of the private houses were drawn as the magnificent *cortége*—the best Milltown, helped by the county capital, could furnish—tramped slowly down the High Street to the intense enjoyment of a hundred peeping eyes. The two or three little fishing-boats lying in the harbour had streamers hoisted half-mast high—they had been sent down by order, and were scarlet and buff, the Hamley colours, with a black bar for mourning across; half the community were made mourners by the undertaker, and had hat-bands and scarves as symbols of their grief; and on the Sunday following Mr. Borrodaile preached the funeral sermon, wherein he called the defunct Mrs. Hamley a mother in Israel, and said that at the last day the poor, who were her children, would rise up and call her blessed. Seeing that the practice of almsgiving was held in abhorrence at Abbey Holme, and that charitable contributions were condemned as bad political economy, this was taking rather more than the ordinary ecclesiastical licence, which as a rule goes even beyond the poetic.

As for Mr. Hamley's private and personal emblems of woe they were of the most expressive and expansive kind. The crape on his hat did not leave a quarter of an inch of beaver to be seen; his jet studs and watch-chain were of the largest size and broadest and most florid pattern made; and his glossy black clothes seemed as if an extra dip in the dyeing-vat had been given to them. Dora's mourning was almost as deep as a widow's; save the characteristic cap indeed, it might have been a widow's. She looked very fair and interesting in her sables—"black always did become her," said Bignold, who had been promoted—black, just touched round the face with a narrow line of transparent white; and when she came into church, leaning on Mr. Hamley's arm, she created quite a sensation by the unusual prettiness of her person and the presumed desolateness of her condition.

She was assumed to be so desolate, and Mr. Hamley's grief was taken to be so sincere, that Garth was heard to say bitterly, "He's

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had it out of the Psalms now, and God has cursed the unrighteous as He promised!"

After this Sunday there was a great deal of talk throughout Milltown about Dora. What would become of her no one could exactly determine. Of course she could not live at Abbey Holme with Mr. Hamley alone; and until he married again, which he was pretty sure to do, her case seemed a hard one, brought up as she had been and made so much fuss with, they said among themselves. A few wondered whether the great man would marry Dora herself; but for the most part they believed he would look higher than his cousin, and maybe plant his foot in the peerage this time. Besides, men don't generally take for their wives their own dependants whom they have seen grow up under their roofs from childhood. So it was settled by the majority that Dora would have to leave Abbey Holme, and that Mr. Hamley would marry some grand lady of high degree and small possessions, and found the Hamley family at last.

Colonel Lowe, discussing the great event of the hour with his son, supposed for his part that Mr. Hamley would marry Dora. He could understand now the old shoeblack's policy, he said. He had loved the girl himself, and in all probability everything had been understood and arranged between them long ago; which was the secret of his refusal to give her a dowry when he, Sydney Lowe, had done her the honour to propose to her.

"Any one can see it with half an eye. It was clear as daylight to me at the time, as you must remember I hinted broadly enough to you," said the Colonel in his disdainful way. "These low-bred people have always their mysteries and intrigues on hand; and Syd, my boy, you are well out of that *galère*. You have made better terms for yourself by a long way, and chosen as a gentleman should."

This he said joyously, with his hand laid kindly on his son's shoulder, who looked sulky and by no means responsive. He had not seen Dora since his engagement with Julia Manley, and he dreaded though he longed to see her. He did not know how he could face her with such news as he had to bring, but he thought she would understand the necessities of his position, and he did not want to lose her—in the future. He did warmly and honestly love her with such warmth and honesty as he possessed; and though his love sprang from, and rested on, only the lowest stratum of a man's fancy and passion, still it was all he had to give; and if gold cannot be got from brass, what qualities brass has in itself may at least be recognised.

Among the other qualities, however, which this love of his possessed, jealousy was one of the strongest; and when he heard his father speak of Dora's possibly belonging to Mr. Hamley, he felt as if he should go mad on the spot—mad enough to throw Julia and

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her thousands to the wind, confess everything, and take Dora away—into poverty if it must be—so long as it was into his own keeping before the world, safe from any other man's intrusion. But the habits of a lifetime, and the sordid aims of a selfish nature, were too strong for him. Poverty was Sydney Lowe's Apollyon, whom he dared not fight and could not conquer; and rather than meet this terrible demon, whom we of the nineteenth century dread more than all the others drawn up in line of battle together, he would consent to be perjured on his own account, and to give up the woman he loved—and had married. He was essentially the child of the age; indifferent to everything but physical enjoyment and social well-being, and with no more belief in morals than he had in religion.

Provided a man is not found out, it does not much signify what he does, according to Sydney Lowe; and rather than be found out in a folly that would carry consequences, he would commit a crime for concealment. Money and position were his two gods, of equal height and power; and to these everything in heaven and earth, in life and humanity, had to give way.

Not being able, however, to bear his father's cynicism, and being as profoundly miserable as he could be—and if shallow, he was passionate—he dashed from the room, determined to see Dora at any cost, and to come to some definite understanding with her—his wife; his wife, married to another man! That he should destroy his own secret marriage was one thing, and in the circumstances in which he found himself quite allowable, if to be regretted; but that Dora should give herself and her smiles to Mr. Hamley—no! he could not stand by and see that done! She might commit a crime as well as himself, so far as the sin was concerned. It was not that which troubled him. But she should not give him a rival; and the liberty he took for himself he would kill her before she should share.

While he was fuming at his unlucky position with all its detestable surroundings, cursing Julia, his father, Dora, Mr. Hamley, every one concerned but himself, Mr. Hamley at Abbey Holme was talking seriously to Dora.

It was Monday evening, the day after the funeral sermon which had closed the cycle of the burial solemnities. Everything was done now. Even the undertaker's bill was paid, as well as the bills for servants' mourning and liveries, the carriage trappings, and the like: by which Mr. Hamley got off a large discount for ready money. At home, everything characteristic of and belonging to Mrs. Hamley was put away. Her special little work-table had been placed like a shrine in a corner; her special chair removed; her pile of handsomely-bound religious books was laid up in the library; and her whole personal property was made over unconditionally to Dora, with the exception of the few poor trinkets and ornaments she had possessed

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before her marriage. These were sent down to Patricia labelled "Family Heirlooms," and accompanied by a note meant to be kind, but worded with unconscious offensiveness, wherein Mr. Hamley conveyed these precious deposits to her keeping, as the last representative of the Kemball family; at the same time begging to enclose a sum of fifty pounds in token of respect for the dear departed whose niece she was, and to meet expenses incidental on the melancholy event. It was kindly thought, if clumsily and pompously done; and Patricia had no idea she should hurt him as she did when she returned his fifty-pound note with thanks. But he was really hurt. The man's heart just then was softened, and he was more sensitive than he had ever been in his life before.

Well! the Kemball page of his life was turned down now for ever; and as he said, with a not undeserved sense of satisfaction, judging by his lights, it was a page of which he was not ashamed, and where he had done his duty like a man. But now he was free—the last word had been spelt out, the last line written. He had gone through his lesson triumphantly, and now his play-time had begun. He was free—free to plead, free to enjoy. The man had never looked so well, so near to a strain of nobleness as he did this evening when he came into the drawing-room after dinner, prepared to receive the crowning mercy of his life.

Dora was sitting in her accustomed place alone, dressed for dinner as usual; pretty, soft, amiable also as usual; but devoured by secret fear and anxiety, knowing exactly what was to come, but not knowing how it would end.

When Mr. Hamley entered, and she met him with her pretty smile, subdued to the proper melancholy tone of the moment, making a graceful, half-receptive movement of her head and hand, as if welcoming him to her apartment, she saw her fate. She saw it in the man's white, moved face; in the subtle change from master to wooer, from friend to lover, which was in every line and movement, as he drew a chair close to her, and in his turn motioned her to sit down. It was a queer, theatrical manner of meeting; but it was the kind of thing that pleased him; all display did.

He came to plead. He came confident of the result, but timid too, as real love makes even strong men before they are assured. He came to pour out such wealth of affection as he possessed like hoarded treasures in her lap; and Dora, looking up at him with her sweet, affectionate little face, and heart that seemed to stand still for dread, only wished that he might die—fall dead there at her feet—before he had got time to say what he had waited almost these ten years to say, and what she herself had made it a crime to hear.

He sat down beside her, and took her dainty hand in both his own.

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"Dora," he said in a husky voice, so low and changed it scarcely sounded like his voice at all; "I have something to say to you."

"Yes," said Dora, innocently.

Had she not had nerves of steel she would have shrieked aloud in her terror. As it was, she smiled tenderly, and looked with the sweetest friendliness, like a child or an angel by his side.

"It cannot be a matter of amazement to you what I have to say," began Mr. Hamley oratorically; but his grand manner ill accorded with his trembling hands and unsteady voice. "You must have discovered it for yourself that I love you—love you very dearly, I may say."

"You have always been the kindest of the kind to me," said Dora, lifting her eyes with her special look of shy girl's gratitude.

"I have tried to be so," he answered. "It was not difficult, feeling what I did for you. From the first moment when you came into the house, a pretty little girl, just budding as one may say, up to this hour, when I have your hands in mine over my desolate hearth, I have loved you."

Dora gave his hand a little press, but said nothing.

"Year by year as you grew prettier and more and more the lady, I grew more to love you," he went on to say, drawing a deep breath. "But I do not think I ever took advantage of my position, or treated you with anything but the respect which I should naturally show a lady. You have been always the lady with me, Dora. I loved you —no man more; but I think I may claim to say that I did not show it to you rudely, or make the sainted soul who has just left us anxious or uneasy."

"You have been always very good to me," said Dora softly. "No one could have treated any one with more kindness or generosity than you have treated me."

"I have wished to do so, Dora! I have wished to do so! But it has been hard work at times to control myself; and when other men came after you, it was a struggle then, I can tell you. Still, I did; and I am proud of myself that I did. At one time I was afraid of that young dog—that young Lowe."

Dora raised her pretty shoulders with a movement of disdain. "Oh!" she said, with a satirical little laugh.

"But you assured me it was not so, and I was content. I said to myself, Dora does not know my heart. Dora does not see that I love her—as a man and a husband I must control myself, and not let Dora know my great designs for her when the sainted soul shall be taken from us. If I could show myself to Dora, and let her understand me, and the future I design for her, I should have no fear; but as I cannot, I must do my best to keep her safe, and to save her from mere tuft-hunters, greedy of money, like that mean

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fellow, Lowe. So I put it to you, Dora, as you may remember; and I cannot tell you how you lightened my heart when you said you did not love him. Dora, you gave me new life that day!"

He said this with a burst of tenderness that nearly broke him down. It was pathetic in its own way to see the coarse, strong face of the man softened and quivering with emotion, to see his eyes turned with such tender longing on the fair drooping head beside him, his self-complacency absorbed in the intensity of his love for this girl who was fooling him. Whatever of pure and true and noble there was in Mr. Hamley's nature was all centered in his love for Dora—Dora, the wife of Sydney Lowe—the Rachel for whom he had waited so long, and who had deceived him as she had deceived every one else.

"And you do not love him?" continued Mr. Hamley in the tone of a question. He was sure of his answer, but he longed to hear it again. There are some things which never tire in repetition, and the assurance to a jealous man that he has no cause for jealousy is one of them.

She lifted her eyes to his face with her sudden swift look, dropping the lids immediately.

"Love him!" she said with the most enchanting contempt. "No!"

"And, Dora, you do love me? Let me hear you say so, darling! You have often told me so with those pretty eyes of yours; tell me so now in words," he pleaded. "I must hear you say it—'I love you!'"

"I love you!" replied Dora in a low voice. It was her task, and she must get through it in the best way she could. "Poor Syd!" she thought a little ruefully, which did not prevent her saying her prescribed formula in the most bewitching manner possible.

He caught her to his heart. Strong, conceited, arrogant as he was, at this moment he was nothing but the humble and enraptured lover whom a pair of blue eyes and two red rosebud lips had transported into heaven.

"Now I have won all that I care for in life!" he said, smoothing her hair with a tremulous hand. "Dora as my wife puts the finishing touch to it all. Oh, Dora, you have made a happy man of me to-night! My darling, my pretty pet, my little queen, how happy I shall be! how happy I am!"

"You have made me happy too," said Dora, from the breadth of his chest where her golden head was resting; "how shall I get out of this awful scrape!" being the unspoken commentary that ran side by side with her words.

He passed his large hand over her face. It was such a delicious luxury to him to feel that he had so far the right. He had, as he

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truly boasted, always treated her with self-restraint and respect, and the slackening of the curb was a joy so great he scarcely regretted the price of so many years' control he had paid for it.

"But we will keep it secret between ourselves, my dear," he said. "I should not like to do anything that would be offensive to that sainted soul's memory. She was a good wife to me, if a trifle crabbed and stiff, and I would not like people to say that I danced on her grave, or took my second wife before my first was cold. We will keep all this to our two selves; and when the year is out we will be married quietly, you know, and without much of a spread. Don't you think I am right, Dora?"

"Certainly," she said. "No one must know!"

She said this quite warmly. It was a reprieve to her so far, and who knows what that reprieve might not bring forth? Mr. Hamley might die—he did not look very like it though; or Sydney might die; or Julia Manley; or a thousand things might happen which would set her feet free from their present fetters. Wherefore she assented with alacrity, and so gave Mr. Hamley cause to congratulate himself again on the possession of a prospective wife so full of nice feeling and so entirely the lady as dear Dora.

Furthermore, it was agreed between them that Dora should sometimes visit friends, and sometimes live at Abbey Holme, where there should always be some married woman to be her chaperon and bear her countenance, as Mr. Hamley said; and that everything should be conducted in such a manner as to give no cause of scandal to a world only too ready to find cause.

"I must have my Dora's name kept as clean as a new pin!" said Mr. Hamley, with more poetry of feeling than of speech. "We both owe so much to the memory of the dear departed."

To which Dora, sighing with the most admirable imitation of melancholy, said, "Yes, we do," and was rewarded for her sweetness by a kiss.

So the evening passed, and there was not in all England a happier heart or a prouder man than Jabez Hamley, M.P., and the accepted lover of Dora. Not all the wealth of England could have won him from his present position. He had not a wish ungratified—not a care, not a cloud in his horizon anywhere. Accustomed to self-control and fond of display, it was no great trial to him to have that year of probation before he could call Dora really his own. He wanted the world to see how decorously he could mourn for the sainted soul who had just departed. He too, like Mrs. Hamley, knew that affection and harmony are the only things which render marriage respectable, and that one of open disunion is also one of open scandal. It would have been painful to him, and would have brushed the bloom from the flower of his happiness, had any one

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been able to suspect that he had, as he said, danced on his wife's grave, and taken a second before the first was cold. It was even an additional pleasure to him that he was obliged to conceal his joy. It seemed to make it more entirely his own; and the secret which no one shared with him and Dora was so much the closer bond between them. Yes, he was thoroughly, divinely happy. He stood on the pinnacle, and asked no more of man or gods.

The next day he went down to Mr. Simpson's office.

"Simpson," he said in a melancholy voice, "I wish to add a codicil to my will."

Obsequious Simpson bowed. "Certainly, Mr. Hamley; certainly, sir," he said. "Your instructions?"

"Only a few words," said Mr. Hamley. "Absolute and unconditional bequeathment of all of which I may die possessed, in whatever form the property may consist, to my cousin, Dora Drummond."

Mr. Simpson was too wise to show any feeling, but he was profoundly astonished all the same. He was even more so when Mr. Hamley declared he would not leave the office till this codicil had been written, signed, witnessed, and delivered. The man's whole nature seemed changed. With his widower's sorrowful air was a certain abounding sense of inner joy that did not escape a man so astute as the Milltown lawyer; but he made no comment farther than that it was natural for Mr. Hamley to wish to ensure the well-being of his only relation; and that, wishing no ill to Miss Drummond, he yet hoped she would not profit by his generous disposition in her favour for many a long day yet to come, if indeed she ever did.

To all of which Mr. Hamley answered judiciously, and rode away with a light heart; feeling that, should he meet with any accident, which however he did not expect, dear Dora would be fully provided for, and would wear his memory in perpetual magnificence and sorrow. He wished, though, that he had made a proviso against her marrying. In his lover-like haste to assure her good fortune he had not thought of that; but he felt it would be enough to make him turn in his grave, as people say, if Dora should marry on his money; and he was determined to repair the omission to-morrow. Taking time by the forelock was one of Mr. Hamley's principles as well as Colonel Lowe's; and to-morrow he would act on it.

Meanwhile he went home to what it pleased him to call out of doors his desolate hearth, where he found a superb little dinner, and a beautiful young woman in the most becoming dress possible to be constructed out of crape and bugles, waiting to receive him with a mixture of open friendliness and secret bashfulness which seemed to him just the most fascinating mixture of manner any lady could evince.

This evening, too, passed like the former, save that the softer

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tremulousness of the, as yet, unassured suitor had gone, and a certain fever of delight—a certain bounding, irrepressible, and enthusiastic joy—had taken its place. He could not go to bed; he could not sleep; and when Dora stole down the stairs in her old noiseless way, and went out into the garden to meet her husband, from whom she had had a peremptory letter to-day (she could receive private letters now) Mr. Hamley was in his own room thinking of her, and of all she had said and done to him to-night. She was like a fairy or an angel, he thought with a smile; and that fairy, that angel, loved him, and was his!

"Where nothing is, but all things seem!" How much of life is real anywhere? Prosperity, happiness, truth, even love—what is actual, what only an appearance? More secrets lie behind the closed doors of hearts and homes than the world outside ever dreams of; and more men worship shadows and are made happy by pretences than ever come to the knowledge that they have been tricked.

Chapter XLI.

THE SHADOW IN THE WOOD.

"Syd, it has come at last!" cried Dora, as she ran into her husband's arms in the shrubbery.

What had come? thought Sydney. Her knowledge of his intended marriage with Julia Manley? or had Mr. Hamley discovered all? or could it be that his father was right, and that this vulgar ruffian had dared to lift his eyes to the prize he had won?

"What has come, Dora?" he asked quickly.

"Mr. Hamley," said Dora.

"What about Mr. Hamley?" repeated Sydney. "You speak in riddles to-night—do, please, be plain!"

Dora felt all the awkwardness of the confession she had to make; but as it must be done she had better get over the bad piece of road as quickly as possible. It was a curious position for a woman to have to tell her husband that she had pretended—only pretended, mind!—she was going to be married to another man, even when that husband had announced his intention of marrying another woman!

"Mr. Hamley has proposed to me," said Dora, clasping her hands in each other and resting them on his bended arm.

The moon was bright enough for her to see her husband's eyes, and she did not like the look in them. She felt there was mischief behind them; and angry as she was with him she instinctively met that mischief with a caress.

Caresses do a great deal with some men, and in general they did a great deal with Sydney Lowe. But though, when she looked as she looked now, she had hitherto always made his will her own, to-night

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she failed. Between love and jealousy the latter was the stronger of the two.

"And what did you say, Dora?" he asked, griping her hands harshly.

"What *could* I say, dear?" she answered deprecatingly.

"I did not ask that. You could say a great many things. I asked, what did you say?" he repeated, still with his dead-white face and flaming eyes and dangerously calm manner.

Dora looked at him innocently.

"I said, 'yes,' of course. What else was there for me to do?" she answered, arching her eyebrows.

With a savage oath he flung away the hands which until now he had been grasping, and lifted his arm as if to strike her. Had she shrunk or cowered, he would; but she stood her ground so quietly, and looked at him so prettily, that in a manner she unnerved him. She was desperately frightened nevertheless; but it would never do to let Sydney see that she was afraid of him, she thought. She must hold her own now or never, and make him understand that by his own iniquity he had made himself responsible for all that had come, or was to come. But if he did beat her, and make her black and blue—he looked capable of it—and Mr. Hamley saw the bruises, and asked her about them to-morrow, what should she say to him? Her difficulties were really very great. How she wished one of these two men would die! At this present moment she was quite indifferent which of the two, so long as she was free of one.

All these things she thought in the moment during which she stood with her hands clasped in each other, her head a little bent, and her blue eyes looking up with the tenderest sweetness into Sydney's angry face.

"What nonsense, Syd!" she said, creeping up to him and taking hold of his arms. "How absurd of you to go on like this, dear! If I had not said yes, and pretended that I would, what would have become of me? He would have turned me then and there out of doors, and where could I have gone? Your father is ruined, and you cannot give me a home; besides it is all over the place that you are on the point of marrying Miss Manley, and I should like to know what I am to do!"

"Starve, rather than do such a shameful thing as this!" cried Sydney violently.

"Willingly, if you will starve with me," said pretty Dora amiably. "But I tell you, Syd, frankly, if you marry Julia Manley for money I will marry Mr. Hamley; so now you know."

"Dora, you are too detestable!" cried Sydney. "You seem to forget altogether that you are my wife."

"No, I do not, dear," she answered. "I remember it too well; for

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it makes the whole thing so dreadfully complicated. If we had been only lovers all this time there would have been nothing to be afraid of; but it will be a horribly awkward position for us both when you walk out of church with Miss Manley on your arm as your wife, and we both go out to our bridal dinner-parties afterwards. We shall meet at some of them."

"Oh, Dora, do not say such awful things!" cried Sydney, writhing under her words. "I always thought you had some kind of feeling, some kind of sympathy. You will send me wild if you go on like this!"

"Well, Syd, you are the most extraordinarily unreasonable person I have ever seen!" said Dora. "You first of all marry me under false pretences; then you discard me, and are going to marry somebody else; but you will neither hear it spoken of, nor let me secure myself from ruin. What *do* you propose? or have you anything to propose at all?"

"I have," cried Sydney.

"Well? what?"

He turned away. Sydney Lowe was not much troubled with conscientious scruples nor moral delicacy, but even he hesitated before he propounded the scheme he had devised, whereby he should take all the infamy on himself and make it unnecessary for Dora to imitate him.

"No, Syd," said Dora, when he had taken the bad courage to speak, "I will not do that. We are in an awful scrape, but I don't think that would make it much better. At least, not for me. It would be pleasant enough for you; but for myself—no, I don't see it, Syd!" she added, quite gravely.

"And you prefer that low-lived ruffian, that big brute, to me?" cried Sydney savagely.

"No, Syd, I don't. I loathe and hate Mr. Hamley, and you know that I do; and I love you, and you know that too. I have never loved any man but you, and never shall."

Her head went down on his breast, and his arms were round her dainty waist. His passion changed in an instant to despair, and his anger to a woman's grief.

"Oh, Dora, how can you leave me!" he sobbed. "It breaks my heart to think of it when it does not send me mad!"

"How can you leave me!" she retorted, also sobbing. "You are going to be married now at once; I only said I would, in a year's time, to keep things quiet and see what could be done. It is you who are the deserter, not I."

"What else can I do, darling?" he pleaded. "We are ruined, all of us, unless we can get money, and I know of no other way than this."

This was the first time he had confessed to his intention; and it

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brought the present frightful state of things very vividly before Dora. She turned away and shook herself free from his arms; but if the movement was petulant she softened its harshness by sobbing vehemently. At that moment she hated Mr. Hamley and loved Sydney to distraction—so she thought—and would brave everything rather than give him up to Julia Manley and accept the bitter portion assigned to her on her own side. Her tears unmanned him more than ever. He clasped her to him again, frantically crying—

"Dora! my wife! my own little wife! I cannot give you up! Whatever happens, poverty or no poverty, let us keep together and make the best of things as we have them."

"I will if you will," said Dora between her sobs; and then they kissed each other and cried afresh, and were both profoundly and intensely miserable. They knew well enough that they could not face poverty, but none the more did they wish to part. Selfishness, deceit, recklessness, treachery, crime—all these lay heaped in burning flames on their young heads; but all the same, utterly worthless as they were, they loved each other at the moment, and they suffered. It soothed them to cry: "Let us go into ruin together, so long as we are together." It was a deception born of love and despair. Each recognised the deception in that deeper reasonableness which passion never stirs in some people; but it was a sweet if passing solace, and each thought the other believed in it.

So they stood there in the shadow, clasped in each other's arms; Dora crying on Sydney's shoulder, and he crying over her golden head too, between alternations of hope and misery, impossible suggestions, untenable promises, and sometimes blank confessions of necessities; feeling that the final moment had come, and that the calm counsel of the morning would show them the madness of the night, while both pretended that this madness was to last and to be acted on. More than once however, Sydney begged her to forgive him for the wrong he had done her so unintentionally in marrying her; assuring her—and here he spoke the truth—that he had no kind of knowledge of his father's affairs when he made her his wife, and that he thought the sole hitch was that father's possible refusal to accept her as a daughter-in-law; and Dora assured him—which was not the truth—that she had never until last night had the least idea that Mr. Hamley loved her or regarded her as other than a daughter. Then they spoke of their running away together, and even went to the length of comparing their joint possessions. They did not reckon ten pounds between them. Mr. Hamley paid bills to any amount without remark, but he made no allowances, and he disapproved of ladies possessing much pocket-money; and ten pounds was but a small sum on which to begin life for two young people who could not do a hand's turn for themselves. On which they kissed each

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other again; and Dora wept as she had never wept in her life before; and Sydney felt that he should go mad or do something hideous and desperate if this kind of thing went on much longer. He was, in fact, wrought up to that pitch of fierce excitement wherein a man is no longer master of himself, where consequences are not calculated, results are not foreseen, and where the impulse of the moment, whatever it may be—the passion that lies uppermost—must be obeyed; and is; because reason, conscience, all that renders humanity human, has gone to sleep and only the animal remains. His own tears maddened him, and Dora's distress but added to his madness. A voice seemed to sound in his ear, just two words repeated again and again: "Kill him! kill him!" it said: "kill him! kill him!"

No ways or means presented themselves to his fancy, nor when nor how; only the impulse, only the voice: "Kill him!"

As he held his wife strained in his arms as in a vice, she felt his heart throb against her bosom while he groaned with a kind of angry despair that was scarcely human.

"Sydney," she said, in terror, "are you ill, dear?"

He made no answer, and as the last breath of her words passed over his cheek they heard the door of the house unbolted and unbarred, and presently a man's footstep came heavily down the broad stone flight that led from the door, and on to the gravel of the drive, turning to the left where they were hidden.

Dora clung to her husband in terror. There was no danger of her sobbing now.

"Mr. Hamley!" she gasped.

They shrank back among the trees, but they dared not go very deep into the wood. The night was still, when sound travels far, and the crisp fallen leaves would have betrayed them. Sydney grasped the heavily-loaded life-preserver he always carried with him in these midnight expeditions—an instrument much after his own pattern, slight and inoffensive to look at, but deadly if used in earnest—then pressed his arm closer round Dora and whispered to her hoarsely not to be afraid. But she was even the more afraid for his very words; he looked so dark and deadly, like a human tiger, somehow.

Her mind took it all in; discovery; the men struggling together and one of them badly hurt; her disgrace; the public scandal and the open shame; and then the enforced poverty after all! A minute ago she had been bewailing her hard fate in being forced to separate; now she shuddered at the harder prospect of being forced to keep together.

The steps came nearer. They were firm and heavy, and with them they heard Mr. Hamley's voice, sometimes speaking to himself, sometimes breaking out into a few false notes of song, and sometimes

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laughing softly as a man whose heart is too full of joy for thorough self-containment or repose.

He crossed the broad carriage-drive and came along the walk that skirted the croquet-lawn, and so into the shrubbery path where his fiancée and her husband were hidden. They heard his breathing and the very fret of his watch-chain as he passed.

"Dora!" he said in a tone of such abounding love, such intensity of passion, that Sydney felt the blood leap like fire to his face; "My Dora! my wife! How she loves me! Little angel, how devoted she is to me! I always suspected it—I knew it,—but to hear her say it, 'I love you!'"—in falsetto—"Gad! it nearly did for me, for pleasure! Dora! beauty! little angel! how I love you!"

He went on a few spaces, then he came back again, singing softly what he thought was one of Dora's favourite songs. And then he sat down on a garden chair placed so close to where the young couple stood, that Dora thought he must surely hear their breathing and the beating of her guilty, frightened heart.

"What hands she has!" Mr. Hamley said to himself, after a moment's silence. "What lips! That good-night kiss of hers—I thought I should have turned faint and lost my head! How delightful to feel her soft hair and her velvety cheeks—she is like a flower; and she is my own. Dora! her very name is the prettiest in the world. Dora Hamley! They'll say in London that the M.P. for Milltown has the loveliest little wife in England; and they'll say right. Not the Queen herself can show such another in all her court! And to think of that young beast Lowe presuming so high! The wife of the Member for the borough of Milltown is rather a cut above a profligate blackleg and his son! My Dora; no other man's Dora; only mine! And she loves me so much, and says it so prettily! To think of her saving herself for me; refusing them all because she loved me! Jabez Hamley, you are a happy man to-night! There's not a happier on the whole face of the earth, let him be who he may!"

So he went on talking in broken, interrupted sentences to himself; the man's heart too full for sleep, too rich in joy for rest. He felt as if he should have been suffocated in the house, had he stayed there. He had that strange yearning to carry his joy into the infinity of nature which we all have, even the most prosaic of us, the least sensitive and refined, when our cup is very full and the gates of heaven have rolled back and let us in. The passion of happiness that possessed him was almost more than he could bear, and he came out into the fresh night-air to throw its burden on to something stronger and holier than himself.

He had been happy before this in his life; indeed, his life had been singularly blessed, he said to himself. He had been prosperous in all

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ways, successful on all points of his ambition; but he had never felt as he felt now—so possessed with his joy, so overpowered with his bliss. He had to keep silence to all the world of his happiness in Dora. To the outside onlookers he must wear crape round his hat and a sorrowful countenance for the due observance of the decencies; he could tell his secret to none; but like the man who must whisper what he knew of the king to the reeds, he too must whisper what he felt to the night. It was very un-English, very boyish; but it was nature. His life hitherto had been arid of love. He had married early for ambition, and he had prudently resolved to make that marriage a success. To do this he had not suffered his fancy to stray to the right or the left; and his very love for Dora had been a growth, not a sudden passion, and never fully confessed even to himself in its intensity, if it had been in its hope, because he had never dared to indulge in it till now. And the first love of a man's life matured at nearly fifty, is a deeper and more absorbing passion than even the most fervid fancy of earlier youth.

He did not sit there long, though it seemed like an age to the two hidden behind the trees listening to his boastful gladness—the one in such chill of abject terror, the other in such fire of torturing rage. Restless, feverish, with his chest expanded and his head held high, h wandered down the avenue, and presently they heard the gate leading into the wood from the shrubbery creak as it swung back, and the last of his footsteps died away.

Then Sydney, putting Dora from him without a word, without a sign, turning only upon her a pair of flaming eyes burning like fire beneath his dark brows, motioned her silently to the house; while he, drawing a deep breath, shifted his loaded cane to a yet more convenient hold in the middle, and set off with a swift and stealthy pace down the avenue.

"Sydney!" whispered Dora.

But he was gone. Keeping in the shadow of the trees, and with that light walk of his which he had practised so often, and which was scarcely more noisy than the tread of a panther, she could neither see nor hear him; and after lingering for a moment, she too turned and ran, and was soon safe in her own room, unseen and unsuspected. No one who had seen her fair pretty face half an hour after, nestled among the lace and linen of her luxurious pillow, sleeping as tranquilly as a child, her cheeks touched with a pink flush like a monthly rose, her small hand half-hidden among her golden hair, would have imagined that she had just escaped from one danger to herself, while leaving in the thick of peril the two men who loved her. She was of the tribe felis femina; not cruel of nature if she was of need; and preferring her own ease before all other things above or below.

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Still softly singing to himself, Mr. Hamley walked on through the little wood which, when he first bought Abbey Holme, was the boundary of his possessions. He had a special love for this tangled thicket: it was pretty and picturesque, with a pleasant trout-stream running through, broadening into a fair expanse of water where he kept a couple of swans and some favourite fowl. He remembered how glad he was, years ago, when he walked through this very path and took possession of the wood as master and owner. He had often stolen over the fences and got nuts and blackberries there in his ragged days; he took care that no ragged urchins stole over the fences now for nuts or blackberries!—and he remembered his proud delight in finding himself the lawful master of his former filched Paradise. It was eighteen years ago. How time had passed and prospered with him since then! Year by year he had gathered more, and year by year he would gather more still. His wealth had got to that point when it increases by itself; for spend as much as he could —that is, as much as he cared to spend—he could not get through all his income. He had that Cragfoot estate to get in yet, he thought; and maybe more land might come into the market, which he would secure. There were outlying bits he was beginning to covet, and that he thought would fit in well with his fields; but for these he could afford to wait.

He was glad about Cragfoot, though. He would make it a Dower-house for Dora. Had Patricia Kemball been a sensible girl, and done as she ought to have done in her aunt's lifetime, he would have made over the whole concern to her as her portion; now he would give it to Dora, and call it "Dora's Dower," as a remembrance. He laughed right out when he thought of this. It would be a pleasant revenge on that young profligate who had dared to ask him for Dora's hand!

How beautiful the night was! The scented autumn air hanging in a light vapour that shone like silver among the trees, veiling the direct brilliancy of the moon and softening it into a general atmosphere of mild radiance rather than a specialised light, seemed more delightful to him than he had ever known an October night to be, or indeed, any night of any year. It was quite summer-like, he thought, as he took off his hat and flung back his coat, looking about him. He had got now to the Oval, a cleared space by the side of the lake, as the broadened reach of river was called; and stood there bare-headed in the moonlight, watching the white swans floating lazily on the water. His back was towards the house, the chimneys of which could be seen over the tops of the trees in daylight.

Watching the swans, something in their graceful gliding movement struck the imagination of the man whose very soul seemed transformed to-night. It was the whiteness of Dora, the grace of Dora,

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the caressing, subtle charm of Dora, the purity of Dora. He saw her everywhere; earth and heaven and all forms of loveliness were filled with her, and everything was but a type—a repetition of her excellence and beauty.

"My Dora!" he said aloud. Then, with a sudden rush of feeling, the like of which he had never known before, he cried out as if in an ecstasy, "Thank God for her love!"

A whistling noise as a stick cut sharply through the air, the crash of breaking bone, a stifled cry, a heavy fall, and Mr. Hamley's life was over; his love, his joy, his prosperity, his vainglory, nothing more now than a handful of dust fanned by the midnight air—the thought of a man which had passed like a summer's cloud. Had his death been by any other method, had his heart burst in his great joy, had he died by the visitation of God or by a thunderbolt from heaven, one would have said that he had died at the right moment. To-morrow the ecstasy which had lifted him to-night beyond himself would have withered down into the vulgar narrowness of his every-day life; his soul, which had expanded into poetry, would have shrunk back into its old groove of ignoble ostentation, of insolent self-assertion; and his very love for Dora would by time have become first the mere pride of possession, then indifference, and perhaps have ended in jealousy and estrangement. He would never have been so great again; so near to nobleness as he was to-night; for though the cause of his passionate emotion was a cheat, his feeling was true. The tragedy by which all was over for him in life was a foul and cruel crime, but it gave him a pathos he would never have had else, and crystallized for ever the dignity and sublimer passion of the hour.

As Mr. Hamley fell, a slight young figure shot quickly by, plunged again into the shadow of the wood, leaped wall and fence and gate, going always by circuitous paths till it struck the high road, where, running still, always keeping in the shadow, Sydney Lowe soon gained the shelter of his own home as entirely unsuspected and undiscovered as Dora had been. Creeping noiselessly upstairs, he went into his private room; carefully examined his clothes, whence he removed certain damning stains and spots; stirred up the dying embers of the fire, and burned in the flame a heavily-loaded life-preserver, running the lead through a bullet-mould, as he had often done when a boy. And then he went to bed, where he laid as if in an ague fit till the morning. He had obeyed that haunting voice, and committed the crime he had been half-unconsciously meditating for many weeks, and now stood face to face with the consequences. His chance of detection? It all depended on whether he had been seen or not, or if seen, recognised. And if seen and recognised, what then was he to do?

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He lay there calculating, inventing, his brain on fire, his thoughts incoherent in their activity; half resolving to leave the place and England to-morrow; then again feeling that his only policy was to remain and trust to his good stars and his own cleverness, should suspicion arise and his name get bruited abroad. And while he was torturing himself with the criminal's coward fears, James Garth was making his way too, from the wood, carrying a bag full of game which he had just netted in the preserves. Not half an hour before Mr. Hamley came to the Oval he had passed through the paths with his snares; and had lifted what his last night's setting had brought him.

For Garth had turned poacher of late days, more as an act of revenge than for any other reason. It pleased the man's savage feeling to rob Mr. Hamley, who he always said had robbed him. It was his crude version of the law which gives an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; and he helped himself pretty freely. More than once the head-keeper had warned him. They had been old friends in the days when James held his father's land, and he did not want to be hard on him. Still, his duty was to watch the game, and let no man meddle with it; and so he said; and each time he had it to say he spoke more sternly than before. He had been about the preserves to-night as usual, and had seen a figure come out of the little wood and run across the open in the moonlight for a moment, then dart under cover again. It was a younger, slighter-looking man than Garth, it seemed to him, and evidently carrying nothing weighty. But there was not much doubt in his own mind that he had made a mistake, and that it was Garth whom he had seen, when all the circumstances came to light; for who else was it possible to have been? When he and the under-gamekeeper, making their rounds the next day, came upon the stiff body of their murdered master lying in the Oval with his skull battered in by one tremendous blow given from behind, and a piece of white-spotted blue bandana hanging on one of the bushes near, the man's heart stood still; for he recognised the neckerchief as the one James Garth habitually wore, and the whole crime became clear.

"Whosesoever throat this fits has done it," said the under-gamekeeper, pointing to the bush; and the police, when they were sent for, said so too.

And what excuse could Garth make? There, under his bed, was the bag of game; round his neck the torn bandana, with its missing piece found on the bushes close to where Mr. Hamley was lying murdered. There was no denial of the one fact, and the inference was too strong to be gainsaid. The poacher was arrested on suspicion, committed on the capital charge, and sent to jail to stand his trial at the coming assize, Milltown having but one mind on the matter—that he

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was guilty. For again and again they asked who else could have done it? Mr. Hamley was not the beloved of all men, but he had no enemies save this gloomy, discontented peasant whose land he had bought, and whom he had thus made his foe for life—and death.

Chapter XLII.

TRUTH AND SEEMING.

There is nothing of which a poacher is not capable. Given a pair of hands bold enough to set snares for the squire's game, and you have a heart black enough to compass the squire's murder. This is a logical sequence in the minds of the landed gentry, and they act on it, when they have the chance, with singular uniformity of feeling. A poacher is the common enemy of all men with game preserves; and they think they do the community good service by getting rid of him on any pretext that will serve.

Whether it is he who is intrinsically bad, or the law which makes him so, does not trouble them. Men in possession are not given to abstract reasoning, and first principles have nothing to do with Acts of Parliament. To break the law has an ugly sound with it to those whose gain is to keep it; and practical protest against inequitable decrees is a crime where readjustment would pare off some of the golden fringes from the rich man's garments to give decent clothing to the poor. So it is that a poacher has but hard measure meted out to him at the hands of magisterial game preserves; and class enmity, always bitter, is never more so than when it has to deal with a man who has snared a pheasant or netted a salmon by the right of nature, and against the game law.

Thus, when it became known that James Garth had taken to poaching, his arrest on a charge of murder was quite in the order of things. Discontent and springes together make an amalgam that renders the worst crime of all easy; and the poor fellow was condemned long before he was tried. When that conclusive bit of white-spotted blue bandana was compared with the yeoman's neckerchief and found to correspond with the torn end, there was not the shadow of doubt left, nor the chance of escape. The whole thing fitted in, piece by piece, with as much accuracy as those two ends of torn silk; and the hypothesis was as clear as demonstrated fact.

Garth had been poaching; Mr. Hamley, suspecting something, or perhaps only restless from grief at the loss of his wife, had gone out into the wood and had caught him in the fact. There had been an altercation; and Garth, being ordered off, had gone sullenly away, when he had turned, and creeping noiselessly behind his detector had struck him on the back of the head with some round, heavy instrument, and so had killed him treacherously on the spot. Nothing

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could be clearer. The game was found under his bed, and the gamekeeper, his own friend, had seen him running across the open. He had not known him at first; at least not for certain, in the shimmery moonlight; the man he had seen looked younger and of lighter build, he said, and he had not taken him to be his old friend and mate; but enlightened by after events, he reconsidered and corrected his first impression, and was prepared now to maintain, sadly enough, that it was James Garth, and none other, whom he had seen escaping from the place of murder. For you see, said the man, as all Milltown said in concert, who else could it be?

All the bitter words Garth had said, all his discontent and angry despair, Mrs. Garth's loud-voiced passion at the dismissal of her daughter, every small and until now half-forgotten incident, and especially that scene where he had had that kind of fit, and had cried "Murder!" at the Long Field Gate, came back to the memories of those who had heard and seen. And then that torn fragment of bandana! It was a small thing on which to hang a man; but it hanged him nevertheless. All saw in it the finger of Providence, which forces a man who commits a crime to leave some betraying sign by which the old saying that murder will out, may be justified; and the finger of Providence was accepted as a guide pointing in the right direction in this instance.

A proved poacher; confessedly out in the preserves on the night of the murder; seen escaping from near the very spot by his friend the gamekeeper, a reluctant if honest witness; and with a fragment of his neckerchief found fluttering in the bushes close to the spot—what could save him? Not the absence of the instrument with which the deed was done; though the woods were searched far and near for something that would fit into that awful wound; not his own protestation of innocence made once and never repeated, for he became sullen on the trial, and stood as if he did not care which way the verdict went; not his previous good character, seeing that even good men may lapse and that no saint is sure; not even the current rumour that his brain was touched, for the jail-surgeon certified his perfect sanity; nothing that could be urged had any weight in face of the overwhelming force of the circumstantial evidence brought against him, backed by the hypothesis born of his notorious enmity and discontent.

He was tried; well defended; but found guilty all the same; and sentenced to be hanged by the judge in an impressive speech which lost its point so far as the prisoner was concerned, from the simple fact that he had not done that thing for which he was exhorted to repent and condemned to die. But it moved the judge who delivered it and the audience who heard it, and indeed was a fine bit of eloquence full of good, honest human feeling.

After sentence was passed, a petition, headed by Dr. Fletcher, but

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sparsely signed by the rest of the community, was forwarded to the Home Secretary, praying for commutation of the capital sentence. The petitioners were either those few who did not believe, in spite of appearances and no one else possible, that James had done this murder —those half superstitious and wholly unreasonable people who have more faith in character than in circumstantial evidence; or those kindly apologists who believed that he had done it sure enough, but who thought him mad and therefore not responsible. But the Home Secretary was a strong man, and returned the memorial with the answer, that he saw no reason to interfere with the regular course of justice. The prisoner had had a fair trial, and the laws must be obeyed.

There was no help for it then. In heaven there might be a re-arrangement of the sentence, but on earth it was final; and James Garth was hanged within the precincts of the county jail; his last words, while Calcraft was arranging the drop, being, "Gentlemen, I am innocent!" as he lifted his wan face to the light and looked as a brave man does when he meets an ignoble doom nobly. But all the thinking and educated people of Milltown said he richly deserved his fate; all save Henry Fletcher, whose defence however had done the poor fellow no kind of good, and himself that amount of harm which comes from the open expression of unpopular opinions. The gentry took grave exception at this continual advocacy of the poor, characteristic of him. They said, bitterly, that it did not signify what a common man did, if it would only injure and annoy the rich, that mad fellow was on his side. They might all have their throats cut, and he would move heaven and earth to get the interesting criminal off, without a thought for the victim. It was infamous, disgusting, and he ought to be drummed out of society for it.

No one was so indignant as Colonel Lowe; though to make amends no one was so silent as his son. The Colonel liked Henry Fletcher well enough, he said, as they all knew; and he had always disliked that poor Hamley fellow, as also they all knew; and he had never concealed his contempt for him nor kowtowed to him as the rest had done; but when it came to taking sides with his murderer—good heavens! that was another matter. A gentleman may keep aloof from a vulgar upstart and yet not hold with the ruffian who has assassinated him in his own grounds. A petition for a reprieve? No! If Garth could he hanged twice over, the punishment would not be more than he deserved; and he, Colonel Lowe, would vote for the second drop. What would become of the country if such crimes as these were winked at? No; none of these sentimentalities suited the Colonel. Gag such mischievous demagogues as Henry Fletcher; let Garth swing; and above all things defend the majesty of the law and keep up the due subordination of classes.

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So Garth did swing, and no living soul knew the real truth but one—he who had burnt a slight cane in the fire one October night, and run a lump of lead through a bullet mould. And no living soul suspected the truth but one—she who had seen her husband steal, with his panther-like tread, on the traces of her lover in the shadow of the wood, and who knew what was in his heart.

After this a subscription was got up for Garth's widow and orphans, and they were shipped off to Australia as creatures too tainted for the purity of Milltown. They were the victims of circumstances, as so many of us are; martyrs crushed under the wheels of that tremendous car where sits the Justice of the World; the helpless struck down by the blind; sinless Cains bearing the brand unrighteously, but none the less shunned of men because of that unrighteousness. It had been a frightful page in Milltown history; there had never been such a one before; and the citizens felt that the best thing to do was to obliterate the last traces as quickly as possible, and wipe out the name of Garth from the annals of the place.

When Mr. Hamley died and was buried, his will was read; and Dora Drummond was proved his heiress. He had made it hastily—a mere codicil of a few words—the very day before he was murdered, poor man! as if he had had a prevision of his fate, they said with pale cheeks. Nothing touched the public imagination more than this. There was a pathos, almost a poetry in the action that counted much in the general indictment against Garth; and the popular feeling ran high in favour of the murdered member for a disposition of his effects which betokened such a generous and fatherly interest in his young relative.

Thus Dora came into absolute possession of everything, untrammelled by a single condition. No guardian, no trustee had been appointed; nothing but her own sovereign will to administer and distribute all this immense fortune. She was the mistress of Abbey Holme and of the whole estate; the richest woman for miles round; before whose wealth poor Julia Manley's hundred thousand pounds shrank into insignificance, and to whom rumour gave even more than she had.

It was marvellous to see how beautiful and beloved she became all at once to Milltown; how much every one suddenly found out she had been always admired and liked; and how each person claimed to have specially discerned her worth, and valued it, in the bygone years. Not a house failed in its sympathetic respect for the young heiress, and the Countess of Dovedale was among the earliest condolers. Perhaps she gave a half rueful thought to Lady Maud who accompanied her; at any rate, that young noblewoman imagined, as Patricia had so often done in her past world, that her future mother-in-law had a headache, and had best be left to herself during the

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drive. When they had deposited their cards and driven away, my lady spoke of Miss Drummond quite warmly. She was so perfectly well bred, she said; and such a lovely creature! She must be fabulously rich—too rich indeed for a woman; and she, the Countess, hoped she would marry soon, and marry well. It was too heavy a responsibility for such a young and lovely creature as she was; she ought to marry into a good family where there was a sensible mother—a woman of the world who could guide and direct her—and where her money would do good and be the means of exalting herself; one of the aristocracy, in short. To which Lady Maud answered tranquilly, yes, she ought; and perhaps under the Countess's wing and her own, when she should be Lady Merrian, she would.

All these kindly speculations however, were soon set at rset; and in a very short time it became known that Dora Drummond was going to marry young Sydney Lowe. People of course found fault with her choice and ridiculed her taste, and cried what a pity! to each other when they met in the market-place; but a few of the robuster kind—those whose wealth-worship nothing could chill nor shock—affected to have known of this attachment from the beginning, and to find it an exquisite instance of human constancy. To be sure, there were a few awkward whispers about Julia Manley; for the Colonel, to clinch the decision he had good reason to consider wavering, had told every one exultingly of his son's engagement to this young lady, whose excellence he had vaunted in almost poetic terms. Now, within twelve hours of the reading of Mr. Hamley's will, an occasion was found for a rupture between the lovers; and though Julia humbled herself, poor soul, to that point where submission ends and degradation begins, she could not soften her angry idol. He definitively and somewhat coarsely broke with her for ever; and the heartbroken creature fled away with her thousands and her sorrows into Cornwall, where she established herself in a mining town, embraced Wesleyanism, and became a thorn in the side of the Broad Church clergyman.

Dora and Sydney married quite soon after all these stirring events. The world said she was right. She was too young to live alone, and though Mr. Hamley had made her his heiress, and she owed all imaginable respect to his memory, he had not been a near relative; and, considering all the circumstances, she need not wait long. A quiet marriage giving her a companion and protector was by far the best thing for her; and they applauded her decision. A month after the murder she was united to Sydney Lowe, quietly and without parade. Colonel and Mrs. Lowe were the only people at the wedding, Patricia Kemball refusing to be bridesmaid.

For one thing she was greatly blamed by all sensible people, her gross imprudence in having no settlements. It was a curious bit of irony that Mr. Hamley's wealth should pass unconditionally into the

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hands of Sydney Lowe, but the world is full of such. Mr. Simpson urged her to secure at least something; and even the Colonel, not planning villany, thought she would do well to have her own dower properly assured; but Sydney said he would marry no woman on earth with settlements; and after a private conversation with Dora, she gave in, and his will triumphed, as the man's should, he said. No one suspected the root of this imprudent arrangement; and Sydney got great credit for generosity in making a post-nuptial settlement which assured Dora a fair share of her own wealth. For the rest, he made no bad use of her money. Indeed he became rather close-fisted than otherwise, responsibility seeming to have worked a radical change in him somehow, and to have even gone beyond the point of steadying him. He released Cragfoot, paid off his father's debts, and set him on his legs again; but he told him sternly that this was the only thing he would do for him, and that if he fell into the mire again he might pick himself out the best way he could. He was as little like the old Syd, now that he had money, as was the law-respecting king like the law-breaking prince. He was gloomy, stern, morosely pious, would keep no society, and of frightfully irritable nerves. His health broke suddenly, and he was soon startled, soon made angry and uneasy. He had a listening look about his eyes that struck people as odd, and he hated to hear the names of Hamley or Garth. People said he drank in private; some that he ate opium; others that he gambled. A thousand reasons were whispered from one to the other to account for this extraordinary change in him; and none hit the truth. So far from any such vice as drinking or drugging, he seemed afraid to trust his senses into the keeping of any one or anything but himself, and slept with locked doors, and a loaded pistol.

He and Dora got on together pretty well, judging by appearances; which were fallacious. She was too well trained in concealment to show him what she suspected or the world what she felt; but she often cried in secret, and wished she had never known Sydney Lowe, and that she was again under the Hamley rule. She had but exchanged masters; and of the two her husband's hand was the heavier.

She got a small amount of feminine consolation however, in the quiet impertinence with which she treated the Colonel and Mrs. Lowe. Once she had courted them by all her pretty arts in vain; now they were obsequious to her, while she snubbed them with merciless good-breeding, and made them regret that they had not had enough prophetic insight to have secured her when they might, and before she had become publicly a prize.

On the whole, then, the Abbey Holme household, though a failure and a wreck, if judged of by truth and principle, was sufficiently well ordered for outward purposes. True, Dora lost her beauty, and became old and haggard suddenly, with a scared look in her eyes that seemed the reflection of her husband's abiding expression of listening

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and watching; but she was always graceful and conciliating to her world on those rare occasions when she appeared in society; and if Sydney was not popular he had abundant obeisance done to him. No one cried out against him that he had committed theft, forgery, and murder, when he stood up in the Abbey Holme pew on Sundays, and enriched the choir with his clear tenor that sounded above all the rest. Nor when he sat on the bench and leaned ever to the side of rigour and righteousness, did his brother magistrates denounce him as a greater criminal than the poor half-witted clods whom he judged so severely. What was done, was done; and no one knew or ever would know: and for the rest he passed through life in the odour of respectability, beloved by none, known by none, bearing ever with him the consciousness of crime and the belief in his own eternal damnation, but bowed down to by all.

Patricia spent her days tranquilly enough at the Hollies, in the midst of love and duty. There were no brilliant meteors in her sky, but no clouds and no storms; it was sunlight of the best kind—the sunlight of affection, contentment, and a pure conscience. Her happy girlhood had passed for ever, but it had left a womanhood greater and nobler than itself had been; a womanhood of deeper thought and higher aims—yes, and of a more exalted love than would have come to her had she remained untaught of sorrow.

Years passed before Gordon returned, but years that did good work in both. When the drift-time was over, and they stood once more together hand in hand on the seashore, as in the old days, she was no longer a girl, living only in the joy of her own youth and love and innocence, but a woman who had learnt the deeper meaning of life through the high teaching of suffering and trial; a woman self-consecrated to live, like the Fletchers, by principle rather than expediency; for truth, not seeming; for the inner law of nobleness, not the outer gain of pleasure. And he too, was no longer the mere boy who had the boy's hope and the boy's courage, but a man who had learnt like herself something of the deeper meaning of the Great Riddle, and had set himself to live according to his knowledge.

She and Gordon were poor enough when they married; and Dora, now that she was no longer afraid of Patricia, knowing by experience how entirely she might trust her silence and loyalty, pitied them profoundly from the luxurious depths of her gorgeous, loveless, miserable home. She would have helped them generously, if they would have taken help at her hand. But Patricia, though she had long ago forgiven her freely and fully—long ago resolved to bear that burden of shame for her to her life's end, patiently and faithfully—would never enter into terms of friendship with her again. Besides, though poor in the world's goods, she was infinitely richer in heart and spirit than the faded, frightened, melancholy mistress of Abbey Holme; the wife of the man who slept with locked doors and a loaded

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revolver by his side, and who had bad dreams, and believed in his own eternal destruction.

She never felt so keenly how far better truth is than seeming, and love than riches, as when, one summer's evening, she and the Fletchers and Gordon were standing on the high cliff road, looking at the golden sunset just now flooding earth and sky with that glory which no words, no pigments can possibly describe. They were watching the gradual passing of the gold to crimson, and then to deeper purple, in that quiet, half-entranced way which makes silence so eloquent, when a carriage drove slowly past. It was the Abbey Holme carriage, containing Dora and her husband. Dress, appointment, equipage—all were of the costliest kind, the most absolute perfection. The land they drove over was their own; the men they passed did homage to them, their masters; they had conquered fortune and distanced justice; they were above even the accidents of life, and they had means to gratify every conceivable desire. But the inner misery of the faces that looked out from those superb surroundings sufficiently confessed their worthlessness.

"Well! for all their money I would not exchange places with those people," said Gordon, as they passed. "It is not what we have, but what we are, that tells; and of the two we are the more to be envied—what do you say, Pat?"

She looked up into her husband's handsome, manly face, bending down to hers with such frank and trustful love.

"I think so," she said, earnestly.

"And I know it," said Henry Fletcher, taking her hand on his arm. "Between Dora and Patricia the world would make no doubt which was the more to be envied; but I fancy the judgment of God will not go with the verdict of the world; and that truth and seeming were never at greater odds than they are and have been all through the history of these two girls!"

"Thank God the truth has come to my share!" said Gordon fervently. "I should have done ill with a whited sepulchre. Don't you remember, Pat, how I always counted on your trueheartedness?"

She laughed a little shyly, and blushed vividly.

"Yes," she said, looking at him tenderly; "I remember how good you always were to me! And so long as you and these dear ones are satisfied with me I am quite happy."

"Dear child!" said Catherine caressingly, "how sweet life must be to you then!"

"To us all!" she answered.

"Yes," said Gordon; "to us all!"

THE END.

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Lines Written on a Lady's Fan.

When fallen Eve became aware
How ill she had behaved to man,
To hide from his reproachful stare,
She went and made herself a fan.

But when she peeped above the rim
In wistful deprecating wise,
The action rather tickled him—
He "didn't know she had such eyes."

So when he asked her to explain
The object of that new conceit,
Away went shame—she peeped again,
And said, "to screen her from the heat."

The day was hers; full many too
Have conquered thus in many lands;
Eve told her daughters what to do
In future with their idle hands.

P. T. W.

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Mirabeau and Madame de Nehra.

EVERYONE who has heard of Mirabeau is probably familiar with the story of his love for "Sophie," through her celebrated "Letters." It is a wild romantic story, in keeping with the impetuous, audacious, lawless character of the man. A large and noble nature, but also ignoble, coarse, sensual, utterly uncontrolled, incapable of self-government, yet possessing withal a singular faculty of governing others—swaying them whither he would by the fascination of his resistless genius, his indomitable will, drawing them towards him by the force of an invincible attraction. A nature difficult, almost impossible to comprehend or to judge rightly—so complicated, so completely opposed were the qualities which one would have deemed it nearly impossible to exist in the character of one man. It is easy to understand the power he exercised over Louise Monnier, young, romantic, and beautiful, shut up in a dreary little country town, with an old jealous cross-grained husband for a jailor. Near Pontarlier is the Castle of Tours, in which unruly Mirabeau was confined by lettres de cachet, eating out his heart in forced inaction. Pontarlier is, as we have said, near, and Mirabeau walks out daily on parole, often bending his steps towards the sad little town, and the two came together, unchecked, Mirabeau's notorious ugliness rendering him harmless in the eyes of Sophie's jailor; and the two flints meeting they strike fire, and then follows a wild story of flight and pursuit, and wondrous tales of escapes and adventures, which read like a romance of olden times, coming to rest at last in a little garret-room in Amsterdam, where these two lived an idyllic life for eight months, and then parted. Mirabeau to Vincennes; Sophie—to what?—it is generally believed that she, "unable to live alone in the universe," killed herself; but she did not—at least not then. She first strove to console herself with the society of an officer of the Marshalsea, a brutal man, who beat her; and then with the companionship of a cavalry officer, who was better mannered, and did not beat her, but who unluckily died of disease of the lungs at the moment when he had resolved to legitimatise their connection by marriage ties. Then, and then only, nine years after her separation from Mirabeau, life became intolerable to our romantic Sophie, and she suffocated herself.

It is pleasant to turn from this tale of lawless passions to that of a woman whose connection with Mirabeau is less notorious, less

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romantic, but whose influence was as pure and elevating to the man she loved as that of her predecessor had been harmful and degrading.

Among the many relics of his adopted father possessed by M. Lucas de Montigny—busts, drawings, autographs, &c.—there is a miniature painting of a beautiful woman of about twenty-eight years of age; it is an intellectual face, and is at the same time inexpressibly charming in its sweetness and refinement. The original of that portrait was Madame de Nehra, the illegitimate daughter of one Onno Zvier, a Dutchman, of some celebrity in the political world of Holland during the eighteenth century. Of all the women Mirabeau loved, and of all the women who loved him, Madame de Nehra was the one who most completely and entirely devoted herself to him. An orphan and unmarried, there were no previous ties to sunder; she lived with Mirabeau for five years, and all who knew her during that period and witnessed the self-sacrificing devotion with which she gave herself up to the happiness and the honour of the man she loved, speak of her with the deepest respect and esteem. Mirabeau's incurable fickleness, which in him amounted to a disease, so wounded her womanly pride, that he drove her from him. It was a step she always regretted, but she never ceased to love him, and though she survived him many years, she remained faithful to his memory to the end of her life.

She has left two memoirs of her connection with Mirabeau, the one written shortly after his death, when the writer was about twenty-eight, the other twelve years later in Amsterdam, where Madame de Nehra was then living.

These memoirs were in the possession of Mirabeau's adopted son, M. Lucas de Montigny. He could not reconcile himself to the idea of publishing them, for though he tenderly loved Madame de Nehra, who had been like a second mother to him, he feared that these memoirs would produce an unfavourable impression of the man whose memory he so passionately worshipped. Since M. de Montigny's death, portions of these memoirs have been published,* and from these the reader is able to gather many fragments which are of great value for a right apprehension of Mirabeau's character.

The passionate, eloquent, sensual side of the man's nature is familiar to us all, and it is quite easy to understand how at the age of five-and-twenty he should have fascinated a romantic enthusiastic young woman shut up alone with an old husband in a dreary little country town.

But there must surely have been another side to the nature of a man who, at thirty-six, with a face to the ugliness of which Madame de Nehra herself so forcibly bears witness, should have inspired a

* 'Revue des Deux Mondes,' 1st June, 1850.

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young girl of nineteen, free to choose from all the world, with a sincere, serious, calm affection, untainted with any motives of vanity, sensuality, or interest,—this surely proves that the violence of his character and passions must in some sort have been atoned for by other qualities, good-nature, sensibility, tact, and tenderness.

On the other hand, it also seems a curious anomaly that a woman of Madame de Nehra's moral qualities should have regarded Mirabeau's infidelities with so much toleration, so long as his heart was not seriously engaged. All the accounts we have of Madame de Nehra agree in describing her as a woman whose moral character was in perfect harmony with the sweet, modest, and refined expression of what Mirabeau himself calls her "angelic face." It can perhaps be best accounted for by her own avowal that she never felt for Mirabeau that passionate sentiment called love, but that her affection for him was calm and deep, a mixture of admiration and of compassion, inspired by the contrast between the great powers and noble instincts, the painful weaknesses and the degraded life of the man for whom she had sacrificed everything a woman holds dear.

Madame de Nehra met Mirabeau in 1784, and she thus describes the first impression he produced on her:

"The repulsion his appearance aroused in me is almost incredible: I started back, horrified. . . . . I have since noticed the same effect produced on others, who afterwards not only reconciled themselves to his ugliness, but even maintained that his features were suited to the character of his mind. His face was expressive, his mouth very good, and his smile winning. . . . . His conversation had an inexpressible charm for me; he gave expression in his beautiful language to ideas and thoughts which had lain dormant in me for years, vainly seeking for utterance. Our ideas agreed perfectly."

Madame de Nehra was living in a convent at the time when she first met Mirabeau, and for three months the brilliant orator visited her every day, spending five and six hours at the parlour grating. At last, a day came when he announced to her that he was to leave Paris, and entreated her to accompany him. The idea seemed to her utterly insane; but he described to her his complete isolation and friendless condition; separated from his wife, without parents, friends, or fortune, his position seemed so desolate that she overcame her own repugnance to the plan and yielded to his prayers. She felt that it lay in her power to atone to him for all he had lost; she hoped by her influence to calm and check the transports of her own excited imagination; she sacrificed her peaceful happy life to follow the course of his stormy career.

Her first great difficulty was to bring his pecuniary affairs into some sort of order. He was very extravagant, and deeply in debt, and had no notion of the value of money. He gave her all his money

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to keep, and she laughingly says that she allowed him to spend nothing, and only gave him a *louis d'or* "to carry about in his purse for show," like poor little Grimaldi. She dismissed his servants, sold his carriage and horses, reduced the whole establishment as much as possible. For two months before Mirabeau's journey to England they led a single, quiet, happy life, Mirabeau writing all the morning, while she mended his clothes, dining together and spending the evening with friends. After his return she writes:

"Mirabeau's love for me never altered: indeed, it seemed to grow more tender; but he was often faithless: if he saw a pretty face, or if any woman laid herself out to please him, he took fire at once. These intrigues never lasted long, and after a short time they bored him to such a degree that he used to come and ask my advice as to how he should rid himself of them. He took no pains to hide what never distressed me, and indeed I knew him so well—he was so sincere, and his nature was so simple—that any concealment would have been useless. . . . .

"Nevertheless, in 1785, there was a love affair which gave me the keenest pain, and threatened to break off our intercourse. Madame —— did not dare to attack me openly, but she spared no covert sneers at my simple mode of life and economical habits. I had a great liking for dress, though I detested extravagance; but I think dress is necessary to a woman; a love for what is beautiful evinces taste, and taste evinces refinement. I cannot quite explain what I mean, but refinement in dress seems in some manner to extend its influence from the physical to the moral nature; in a word, if I were a man, my notions as to the manner in which the woman I loved should be habitually clad would be very peculiar. Madame —— had therefore touched my most sensitive point, and I took a violent dislike to the woman who diverted herself by deriding my voluntary sacrifices and privations. They were made for the sake of the man I loved, and whom she was leading back to his old irregular habits of extravagance. We quarrelled incessantly about her; but Mirabeau acknowledged his faults so frankly, and begged so humbly for forgiveness, that I could not be angry for long. That woman caused me a quarter of an hour's agony which I shall never forget. Mirabeau had just received a letter from Madame ——, and had laid it down on the table before him, when the husband entered unannounced, and his eye fell on this long letter in his wife's handwriting, and her seal on the envelope. During an animated discussion on politics which followed, M. —— took up the letter, folded it over and over, and tossed it back on the table. Mirabeau then took it up, as I hoped, to put it in his pocket; not at all, he had forgotten all about it, and, absorbed in some problem, was oblivious of all *billets-doux*, he re-folded it, and quietly laid it down again in the same place. I eagerly stretched out my hand to grasp it. Vain hope! M. —— had again possessed himself of the fatal note, and was rolling it round and round in his fingers. Well, that unlucky bit of paper passed alternately from the hands of the husband to those of the lover, until finally in a tremor of anxiety I pounced upon it, and bore it from the room."

In 1788, while travelling in Germany, he had a severe attack of illness of the same nature as that which afterwards ended his life: Madame de Nehra nursed him with the most devoted care; he could

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not bear her to leave his side, and the doctors were of opinion that her unremitting attention had alone saved his life. This is one of the reasons she so bitterly reproached herself afterwards for leaving him; she knew her influence over him, she thought she might have checked his excesses, which contributed to undermine his constitution and hastened his premature death.

She herself says:

"I shall always reproach myself with having acted from pride where tenderness alone should have governed me. My power over him was great. I possessed his esteem and his entire confidence; I now believe that with patience and gentleness I should in time have attained my object. I could have watched over his health, and checked his excesses. In a word, he might, had I not left him, still be alive, the pride and glory of his country, the supporter of liberty, ... and I, his friend and the companion of his sorrows and of his dangers, I should not be plunged in bitter grief and vain remorse, which will only cease with my life."

After that illness, Mirabeau, strong, sturdy Mirabeau, who had never known a day's illness, suffered almost constantly, and his health seemed completely shattered; and all Madame de Nehra's unhappiness dated from that time. He met with and became enamoured of one Madame Lejay, a coarse, unprincipled, but fascinating and sensual woman, the wife of a librarian; she gradually possessed herself of all Mirabeau's secrets, and threatened him constantly with their betrayal if he crossed her in any way. Madame de Nehra's own words will best describe what followed:

"He began to doubt my love for him, and evil disposed persons eagerly sowed the seeds of dissension. He had, up to that time, been perfectly satisfied with the nature of my love for him; it was now insinuated that it was poor and weak in comparison with the intense passion which was burning in another woman's breast. . . . . Knowing the jealousy of his disposition I had taken the greatest pains to save him from the least cause of anxiety, so that even during his absence I only went out on his business, and only received visits from persons concerned in his affairs. I was happy in my home; my books were my society; the esteem of good people, and the care and love of a charming child he had confided to my care,* repaid me for the loss of all other society. But from that time our happiness was destroyed. He had taken a cottage for me at Passy, and furnished it charmingly. He often came to see me there, but our interviews were always stormy. A part of his life was passed in paroxysms of passion and fury difficult to describe, and the rest lying in tears at my feet, cursing the woman who had disturbed our peace. . . . . This state of things could not last. It wore me out, and I felt it would kill me. He used to compare me with the other women who loved him, and the evidences of their love seemed always to outbalance mine.

"I have often been asked why we did not agree to remain together as friends. We tried again and again to do so; on each occasion a violent

* M. Lucas de Montigny.

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scene ensued, and finally he threatened to shoot himself. I lay on the sofa in a paroxysm of tears, and it was awful to see him standing before me, white with passion, wild with rage, with a pistol in his hand, and to know that the slightest accidental gesture or twitch might end his life. Such scenes were always followed by other scenes of repentance and of bitter grief; he acknowledged everything, implored my pardon, promised never to see Madame Lejay again—and then the next day it had all to be gone through again . . . .

"Wearied out, I demanded that he should separate himself entirely from that woman, and put an end to certain pecuniary transactions of a disreputable nature. He promised all I asked—the promise was broken, and I fled to England, with some money raised on my jewelry. There, at least, my only sufferings were those caused by poverty. A year later I returned to Paris, and went to see M. de Mirabeau, who had sent for me. I was startled by the terrible alteration in his appearance. He spoke with his old confidence of his affairs; he told me of a projected embassy, and expressed a desire that I should accompany him. I saw that he still retained his old love for me; but the sacrifice I demanded had then become impossible: he was too completely in that woman's clutches. . . . We should vainly have longed for our lost happiness. . . . . The feeling we had for each other was like the bloom on a peach: once dispelled, it was gone for ever."

Mirabeau was tired to death of Madame de Lejay, but he dared not quarrel with her, though he felt that in the position he then occupied she degraded and dragged him down. After that interview Mirabeau and Madame de Nehra met two or three times, and then he ceased to ask for her. Soon afterwards he died, in the acme of his fame, and was mourned as perhaps no man has been mourned before or since.

In judging his character and his private life, the evidence of the woman who lived with him for a longer time, and on more intimate terms than any other person, should not be without weight, especially as she herself says none could have suffered more than she did from the two curiously contradictory sides of his character. He took this young girl from the pure sweet life she was leading, used her while the perfume of the delicate flower pleased him, and then flung it ruthlessly aside; and yet she can write thus of him:

"I must acknowledge that his good qualities outbalanced his defects. . . . . His education had increased his faults instead of correcting them. Naturally violent and irritable, he had been thwarted at every turn; nothing had been checked or modified, and the perpetual quarrels of his parents, of which he was a witness from his earliest infancy, were a dangerous example to him for the rest of his life. . . . .

"He must not be judged by the standard of ordinary men; the vehemence of his passions originated in that energy of character which also bore such good and beautiful fruits. His heart was good and tender, and he had an enthusiastic love and admiration for all that was great and beautiful."

It is not surprising that M. Lucas de Montigny should have hesitated to publish the memoirs from which these few extracts are given. The

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picture they present of Mirabeau's moral degradation is almost revolting, and it is almost impossible to believe that a man of his gigantic intellect and powers should have been so completely enslaved by passion as to sacrifice the happiness of a beautiful, refined, charming woman whom he loved, to one who only used him to attain her own ends, and excited his natural violence for her own interest. And yet, he was a great genius, not merely as an orator, but also from the justness of his views, and the profound sagacity of his mind; and in losing him France lost the one man capable of steering her through the chaos into which she had been plunged. We cannot know whether there is any truth in Madame de Nehra's firm conviction that with her care Mirabeau might have lived longer. That she had an elevating, purifying, refining influence on his life, none can doubt.

Let no one blame her for sacrificing everything to him. Had it been possible, she would have remained simply his friend; but her object was to make up to him for all he had lost—wife, friends, and fortune—and to leave his mind free from the petty cares and anxieties which clipped the wings of his genius, so that he might devote his entire energies and his extraordinary powers to his distracted and unhappy country, tottering on the brink of a precipice. When she found that, in order to accomplish this, she must sacrifice everything to him, she did not hesitate; and the fact that she left him at the moment when he was at the height of his popularity and power, will absolve her from any motives save those of the purest and most disinterested friendship. Could she have saved his life, the history of the drama and the world would have been different:

> "If Mirabeau had lived another year! . . . . But he could not live another year any more than he could live another thousand years. Men's years are numbered, and the tale of Mirabeau's was now complete."

One cannot but admire, love, and pity the charming character which is unfolded to us in these Memoirs, and feel grateful to those who have rescued Madame de Nehra's memory from oblivion. It speaks well for Mirabeau that he should have been so intensely and devotedly loved by such a woman; but it is impossible to forgive him for having sacrificed her to his wanton selfishness, and rendered her "the most unfortunate of all living creatures."

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A Few Weeks with Hans Andersen.

THERE is perhaps not one, amongst the crowd of living authors, whose writings are more widely known and lovingly appreciated than the fairy tales of the Danish poet and novelist, Hans Christian Andersen. On the shelves of the student's library, half hidden by works of science, in the lady's boudoir, richly bound and prettily illustrated, and what he likes better himself, in the treasure-drawer of a child, well worn, thumbed, and torn, will be sure to be found a copy of some one of the numerous tales penned by this fascinating and versatile writer.

I cannot describe the thrill of intense pleasure which sent the blood tingling to my cheeks when, on paying a visit a short while since to Denmark, I was told that in a few days Andersen would become a guest in the house where I was staying. For days after this announcement I could think of nothing else but the wonder and delight of really learning to know personally this king of story-tellers. I tried to imagine what he would be like; I would ask no questions, preferring to revel in my own fancies of what his appearance must be, until the moment arrived for standing in his magic presence.

It was a glorious day at the end of August, and the "name's day" of our charming and accomplished hostess.

The country-seat of my friends was about a dozen miles out of Copenhagen, and built on the shores of the Sound—a straggling, delightful house, two stories high, with doors and windows opening on the garden. In front was a large sloping lawn, stretching almost down to the sea, and interspersed with beds of brilliant flowers. On one side wound a pretty pathway, overhung with trees leading off the high road: this was the private way up to the house. On the other side was a delicious little grove of cool and fragrant fir trees. From the roof of the house waved the Danish flag, and two or three other bright-coloured pennons were attached to the high trees in honour of the "name's day" of the lady of the house. Behind was a huge garden, stocked with every kind of fruit in almost exhaustless profusion, and containing two or three charming little summer-houses in which we sometimes drank our coffee.

We had been up from early dawn to gather flowers and evergreens to decorate the rooms in honour of the occasion; and to refresh ourselves after our labour of love, we had taken a dip in the sea from one of

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the quaint little bathing-houses which are attached to nearly all the Danish country villas down by the sea, and are lightly built of a few planks of wood at the end of a rude shaky bridge running out perhaps a dozen or twenty yards into the water.

It was about eleven o'clock when the friends and acquaintances of the family began to arrive, each with a bouquet in hand, to offer their congratulations on the day, and good wishes for the future, according to the simple custom of the polite people of Denmark.

When I joined the company, a little later on, there were about thirty guests assembled, sitting and standing in the verandah and on the lawn, enjoying the warm sunshiny day.

At our feet the broad waters of the Sound lazily lapped against the stone shore, not thirty yards from where we sat, and on her bosom hundreds of graceful sea-going craft quietly stole along, and beyond, just visible in the sunlight, glimmered the southern coast of Sweden. Behind, in the house, all the doors and windows stood open, displaying masses of brilliant-coloured flowers on every table and stand and shelf the rooms afforded. Presently, above the hum and buzz of the conversation which gave life and passion to the scene, I heard the rumble of carriage-wheels cease on the road, and a few moments after, from under the trees of the private pathway, appeared a tall gaunt figure, carrying in his hands a huge basket, or rather tray, of beautifully arranged flowers.

He stood still for a second, quietly surveying the lawn and its occupants, before, suddenly, a chorus of voices exclaimed: "There he is! There is Andersen!" He came forward, smiling to our hostess, Madame H., and presenting her the flowers offered his greetings, and as soon as the tray was out of his hands, seizing both hers and kissing them. Then every one pressed around, eager for a shake of the hand, and delighted to give him a welcome once more in their midst; for he had only that morning arrived from some weeks' or months' absence, and it had been matter of doubt if he would venture from home after such a long journey.

I stood alone on the step of the verandah, gazing at him, my heart so beating from excitement, I was glad no one, in their eagerness to speak to him, had time to notice me. At last, then, I was in the presence of the man whose writings had been the joy of my early life, dearer to me than aught else in the world! I stood still, scanning his features after a while, and wondering unconsciously why such a wonderful genius need be so very very plain in appearance. Presently I felt, rather than saw, his look wander from his friends to my solitary figure on the step, and as he moved forward I heard him say in a frank simple way, "Ah, here is a new face—she does not know me."

Madame H. turned, and smiling to me as I intuitively drew near, answered gaily, "This is our dear English guest, who has been so

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longing to see you, dear Andersen, that she has thought of nothing else for days, I know." "Good," he replied, holding out his hand, and as I put mine into his with a thrill of delight, nay, almost of reverence, he said in his broken English:

"Ah, you would know me? you love me all the time? I will gif you one portrait of Andersen the poet. Have you read my stories?" he added, suddenly changing to German, which he speaks better than English.

"They were the sunshine of my childhood," I answered warmly, all my shyness disappearing before the man's simple, childlike manner. "I loved them better than any others. I slept with them under my pillow from the time I was six years old and could read."

"Oh! that is good," he replied, rubbing his hands, as is his wont when pleased. "Come, you and I will talk a little; I will give you my portrait; we will be friends, dear friends—shall we? You are glad to know me? Every one likes me, Andersen. But now I must talk to all these good people, and tell them the story of my travels. Come and listen, and if you don't understand the Danish, I will translate for you, come." He turned from me, and with the same simple manner in which he had thus spoken of himself to me, he took a seat, and asked the company if they would not like to hear all about his adventures since he had been away.

An hour later, after partaking of chocolate and a sweet Danish cake always served on fête days, most of the guests returned to town, and there remained but a few very intimate friends of the family to dine and spend the evening, amongst whom was Andersen, who intended staying a few weeks with us in this charming retreat by the sea, away from the dust and heat of the city.

In a very few days he and I became fast friends. With a delight that was almost boyish, he read to me various letters of praise and commendation he had received from two or three of the reigning sovereigns of Europe, and from men of standing in the literary world, and one letter that he prized dearly, in a large child's hand, and that he always carried in his pocket-book, from Livingstone's little daughter of six, who had thanked him for "his kindness in writing so many pretty stories." "It warms my heart when the children tell me they love me," he added, as he folded the paper and put it in its place; "but I think all the world loves me, for they love my tales, and my tales they are *me*."

And I think he spoke truly, for his writings contain an exquisite beauty of thought and feeling, with that true appreciation of all that is good and lovely in Nature which only a pure unspoiled talent can bring forth, and in reading his works one is compelled not only to admire his genius, but to love the man who wrote them.

His is a simple nature, easy to read in his every-day relations with

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his fellows. I was charmed with him as a companion. Living in the same house with him, in the free unrestrained intercourse of the country, I spent many a delightful hour by his side, drinking in the wondrous fancies of his brain and listening to his quaint talk, which seemed to come from some far-away world into which he alone, of all I had ever met, had gained admittance. In the cool of the afternoon he liked to walk in the fields with any of our party who were so inclined. For the first quarter of an hour he would not talk much, but shamble along, poking his stick into every hole and corner, or touching with it every odd thing that lay in his path. Then something would attract his attention—a bit of old glass, a faded flower, or a half-eaten insect—no matter what it was, he would stoop and pick it up, touch it tenderly, bend over it caressingly, and then, in a kind of low, half regretful tone, he would begin and tell the story of its life, its joys, its sorrows, and the sad destiny which brought it to the spot where he had found it, till I would stand listening in hushed awe, looking at the thing in his hand, and then at the dreamy face speaking so earnestly, and wonder if the man had really a soul and body belonging to this same earth that all the rest of us dwelt in so prosaically, or if he would presently vanish into the spirit realm from whence he gathered his fanciful ideas, and be no longer by our side.

He seemed to me to live in a world peculiarly his own, all his ideas, thoughts, and actions differing from those around him, and his fanciful interpretations of the every-day incidents of life often made me smile, and made me envy the dear old man the power he had of drawing pleasure to himself and giving amusement to others, from many of the small vexations which are apt to occur in the best regulated and most orderly households.

One day at dinner, little Marie, the youngest child of the house, and a sweet, dainty little damsel of five or six, would not eat her soup. She said the carrot in it was hard, and she did not like it. Now it is a custom in Denmark, rarely allowed to be infringed upon, that a child must finish its soup before eating anything else. It is a good wholesome custom, teaching the young to eat what is placed before them without grumbling. But this day little Marie was rebellious, and pouted, and her soup still remained uneaten when the fish was being handed round. I saw Andersen look at her, stroke his chin, glance round the table, and then a moment later he stooped his gaunt frame and whispered in her ear, "Eat thy soup little Marie, and after dinner thou shalt have a pretty story about a carrot." The dear little face brightened, a smile dimpled her saucy mouth, and without a moment's hesitation, she took up her spoon and hastily swallowed the rest of the "nasty carrot." She knew that a story meant sitting for [illegible] an-hour on "dear Andersen's" (as all the children call him) knee, and listening to tale after tale, "made up" for her special benefit. And

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as I loved a story too, I begged him to begin as soon as dessert was on the table and the servants retired.

Nothing pleases Andersen so truly as to be made much of, to hear that the world speaks well of him, and to be told that he and his works are appreciated outside his own kingdom. The eagerness he displayed struck me as almost childish when, day after day, as my letters were handed me by our host from the post-bag, he wished to know if my friends in England "congratulated" me on being in the same house with "Andersen, the poet;" or if they had sent him any message or greeting, or in any way mentioned him; and, when one unlucky day I had received two letters, neither of which noticed him, after taking them into his own hands and scanning them through, and not finding his name, he muttered softly, "I can't understand it, yet the English they love me fondly."

So it always, as I say, pleased him to be asked for a story, and directly the fruit was on the table, and we were alone, he began and told the following tale, though in far more beautiful and fanciful language than I can now remember.

"Once upon a time, little Marie, there was a beautiful garden in the country, in which all kinds of lovely things were to be found. In one corner, quite out of sight, under ground, lived a charming family with one daughter. This family was called Carrot, and Mr. Carrot, and Mrs. Carrot, and especially Miss Carrot, were all very well behaved, and did their duty as they ought. Now you must know that this Miss Carrot was a very sweet and elegant young thing. She had grown straight and tall, had a beautiful complexion, and had the loveliest green ruffle round her neck in all the neighbourhood. So the youths of that land liked to look at her, and they came and paid court to her, and whispered in her ear how very beautiful they found her, and would have liked to ask her to marry one of them, but her papa frowned at them, and they dared not venture quite so far. Besides, they all knew that her father intended to marry her to a stout, ugly old fellow who lived not far off, and who had demanded her hand long ago when she was quite a wee thing. Poor little Pinky (for that was her name) knew this too, and it made her very sad, for she loved her young cousin with all her heart, a fine, bold fellow, who was as handsome as she was herself. But it was of no use to hope that her father would relent; he had said she was to marry the old, ugly lover, and so marry him she must, unless he would give her up to his rival willingly and quietly. But he had a hard, stony heart, and declared he would have her whether she liked it or not, and he would not listen to her tears and entreaties when she asked him to go and find another bride from amongst the beautiful lady Carrots of the country, but hastened on the marriage and bought all that was required for his new home, and even got the

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ring and ordered the punch that was to be drank on the wedding day. This was very cruel and unkind, but he did not care, for he was one of those selfish creatures who only do what pleases themselves; and little Pinky sat in her room all alone, and cried till she grew quite thin. Her friends had each in turn done their best to try and soften the heart of this ugly, stout, florid old Carrot, and persuade him to give up marrying such a very young lady, who did not love him; but he would listen to none of them, and made her father keep to his word and not let her see any one till the wedding was over.

"At last the great day arrived; all the guests were invited, and every one came. The bride was dressed in all her finery, and stood at the altar by the side of her ugly bridegroom, who looked very important and more strong-hearted than ever. Just as the pretty bride had cast one despairing, soul-rending glance at the cousin she loved so well, and had resigned herself to her cruel fate, suddenly a great crash was heard overhead, and, before any one had time to notice how it was done, the ugly old lover was seized by his green ruffle and dragged away out of sight over their heads, and never came back any more.

"Every one was very glad, for now Pinky could marry the one she loved, and not be sad or sorrowful again. And she did, there and then, and has been happy ever since. And now, little Marie, I must tell you that it was the kind, good gardener who had dragged the ugly old lover from his young bride, and, because he was cruel and unkind, had taken him away from that happy land where he lived, and handed him over to the cook, who cut him in pieces and boiled him in the soup, and sent him up to table to be eaten, because he deserved no better fate."

Andersen can not only weave and tell a story well, but he is a rare reader. Often in the evening, when the drawing-room was full of guests, when the fun and laughter were beginning to decline, or when there was a pause in the exquisite music always to be heard at Madame H.'s charming soirées, I have noticed Andersen quietly rise from his corner, take a paper from his pocket, draw near a lamp, and propose to read a story. Of course, it was one of his own, and voices would be hushed in eager expectation, for all knew that whatever it was, old or new, it would be sure to be worth listening to. Then, with a few words explanatory of the story, he would begin softly, as if to ensure and command the attention of all around, and then gradually grow louder and louder, till his voice, always melodious and full of feeling, had reached the pitch fitted for the room. As he read on and on, and the story unfolded itself, one seemed to forget the society around, and to live in the troubles and sorrows or pleasures of those he was describing. His story done, he would rise from his chair, and with a

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low, awkward bow, and a slight wave of his hand, retire to his corner, and shut his eyes and rest.

Once, when I was telling him how intensely I enjoyed these delicious impromptu readings, and how pleasant and novel such a procedure was, he smiled and answered in his frank way, "If a lady can play, she likes to let others hear her talent; an artist shows his pictures—why should not I tell my little story, for that is my gift from God?"

Andersen has another accomplishment which often causes much merriment to his friends. Give him a pair of scissors and some paper, and in a few moments he will cut out a group of figures, so absurd in their expression and attitudes, that roars of laughter always follow their appearance on the table. How he does it is a mystery, for the scissors move rapidly, and apparently without any forethought or effort, and yet the daintiest young ladies in elaborate dress, the most beautiful foliage to trees, or delicate curves in some graceful, fanciful design, will all, as if by magic, start out of the paper at the request of any child or grown person present. He is rather proud of this unusual talent, and will often sign his name on one of these fragile little picture forms, and present it gravely to a lady, and beg her to keep it for his sake.

He hates and detests physical suffering, and is very irritable when labouring under some passing indisposition or accidental pain.

One morning, when I had known him about a fortnight, in gathering some gooseberries, he ran a thorn from the bush into his finger. I have no doubt the pain was disagreeable, but it seemed more than he could bear. He would let no one touch his hand for hours to extract the thorn, and it was only by the united influence of the whole household, that at last he was persuaded to bathe the swollen finger in hot water to subdue the swelling and ease the pain. Then came the terrible necessity, for terrible it was to him, of extracting with a needle the unlucky thorn. Each one proffered their services, but in vain—he would not have it touched. He could not eat his dinner, and began to be feverish and really ill. Distressed to see him suffering so acutely from such a slight cause, I entreated to be allowed to act as doctor to the tortured finger, and ease the pain by taking it out. To one of his nervous and sensitive nature, the consent to such an undertaking was no slight thing to grant; but worn out with the local annoyance, and also, I fancy, not liking to show such sensitive weakness to a comparative stranger and a foreigner, he gave a feeble nod of assent, which I there and then acted upon, and almost before he knew it, I lifted the little black thorn from its lurking-place, and lo! the terrible operation was over, and the throbbing pain at an end. In the evening he cut two of his most beautiful paper groups, with his name and the date on each, and

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presented them to me with a graceful little speech of thanks for the service I had rendered him in withdrawing the thorn.

Andersen has another gift seldom possessed, or, if possessed, rarely displayed by a man, and that is the art of arranging flowers.

In Denmark, on fête days and saint days of note, it is a pretty custom to decorate the breakfast-table and house-door with wreaths and flowers, as also the chair of the lady who is called after the saints. On each of these occasions which occurred during my happy visit to Petershoï, I gazed with wonder and delight at the charming taste the dear old man showed in his choice of decoration. He never allowed any one to help him arrange the flowers, he said it disturbed his ideas, and he could not work to order, so we generally gathered him a basket full from the overladen garden, and then left him alone to do with them as he would, and the effect of his work was always simply perfect. Often and often, too, he loved to place a tiny nosegay by the plate of some one at breakfast; perhaps it was only a bit of grass gathered here and there during his early walk, a coloured leaf, or a brilliant wild flower, but, put together by his magic hand, would be as dainty and beautiful as if Titania herself had woven it. And to me, one of its special charms consisted in the marvellous likeness these tiny nosegays always seemed to bear to the one for whom it had been woven, and the intuitive power he displayed of accurately reading character by the flowers he chose for his graceful offerings.

I had travelled much, I had been in many charming country houses, but never before or since have I enjoyed a visit so truly and intensely as I did those six weeks spent at Petershoï. The weather was warm and glorious, the country around exquisitely beautiful, tempting one to long walks and rides over mountain and through forest. The Sound lay at our feet, always cool and refreshing; fruit of every kind abounded; and, when it was too warm for exertion, there were plenty of shady nooks to lie and doze or read in. And indoors we were a pleasant party. Madame H., our hostess, is one of the most accomplished musicians of the age, and has a bright fascinating manner that attracts all who know her. Her husband is witty and clever, and a splendid linguist; and their children have been well brought up and educated. They are a charming family, and no wonder Andersen loves to stay with them summer after summer, and to visit them daily in the winter in town, as is his wont. Almost every evening friends from the neighbourhood would drop in for an hour, or people come out from town, uninvited, to enjoy the delicious music and other pleasures sure to be heard and found at Petershoï.

Ah! those evenings were perfect, especially when, as the autumn advanced, it was dark and chilly out of doors, and we retired to the

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drawing-rooms and had music, and now-and-then dancing; and Andersen would read, or a scene from a play would be acted; but always brilliant conversation, amusing repartee, and quick wit might be heard in half-a-dozen languages. For our host culled his friends and filled his drawing-rooms not from one rank or set in society, but from the great, and talented, and gifted of every grade and kind to be found in the country. Men of mere social standing he cared not for; but poets, literary men, artists, actors, singers, diplomats, or distinguished foreigners, all found a welcome and a place at his hospitable table. Conversation never flagged in his rooms; all were brilliant, gay, happy, and very sorry to go when ten o'clock struck, and Herr H. laughingly turned his guests all out. "In the country," he explained to any new-comer who looked astonished when he heard his host say, "Ten minutes to ten, friends, get ready now: in the country we get up with the birds, so we must go to bed early, or we get no sleep."

Andersen enjoyed these evenings immensely. He is a genial, amiable man, and in the simpleness of his heart he judges all men from his own standard. I was told he is a kind good friend to all who seek his advice or help, and that he is so much loved and respected that he rarely eats a dozen dinners at his own home, a suite of rooms in the best part of Copenhagen, in the course of the year. Children worship him, and often seize upon him, climb on his knee, hang to his arms, and entreat to be told if "only one" story, for he never can refuse the coaxing tone of the little ones' "Do, *dear* Andersen."

Andersen must be seventy years of age now. He stoops much when walking, but his hair is not very grey, nor is the thin slight beard he wears under his smooth-shaven chin. His eyes are small, but bright and good-humoured, and his forehead remarkably high; and although he is by no means a handsome man, yet his pleasing, winsome manners and genial smile unconsciously prepossess one at first appearance. His mornings he devotes to writing, but he would often come and join us in the verandah, and read to us, as we worked, the outline of a new story or a fresh idea about an old one.

Like many men of genius, Andersen has his peculiarities, one of which is that at table he likes to be served first; and such is the respect in which he is held in his own country, that in private life all give way to this fancy, and even ladies humour him, at the expense of their own time-honoured rights. To servants and dependants he is ever kind and considerate, and, several times during my stay at Petershoï, I noticed him standing in the kitchen while the cooking was going forward, reading to the maids with as much feeling and interest as he did to the ladies in the drawing-room.

One morning, about a week or ten days ere I was to leave

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Denmark, Andersen entered the room where I was reading, in a loose, faded dressing-gown, with a shawl tied round his neck. Coming towards me with hands outstretched, he cried in a troubled, broken voice:—

"Ah! I am in sorrow. My heart is aching; my best friend is in heaven. Look, read." I took the paper from his hands, and read the announcement of the death of a highly honoured and very celebrated English publisher. "I loved him," he went on, with the tears streaming down his cheeks; "Ah! the happy times I spent in his beautiful home in England. I cannot bear it that he is dead. But he has a family, I will tell them I sorrow with them; only," he added, with a sigh, "they will not understand my Danish words, and I can't write English."

"Let me translate for you," I said.

"But will you put the same burning words of sympathy in your language that my heart will indite to this bereaved family? They love me and will like to hear from me."

"I will try," I answered. He rose from his seat, wiped his wet cheeks, and saying, "Wait here till I come back," went upstairs, and in about an hour returned with the letter that I was to translate. I knew from experience I had undertaken a difficult task, for Andersen's knowledge of English is not very extensive, and he prefers a literal translation of his writing to the most finished and correct phrases, simply because he understands it better. But on this occasion nothing pleased him. Word after word he found fault with; every sentence he grumbled over. It was too cold, it did not express the fulness of his feelings, till at last, in despair, I gave in, and let the dear, kind old man have his way, and use the English words he liked best, at the expense of idiom and our usual mode of address; for his heart was sore with the loss of his friend, and he longed to offer all the comfort he had it in his power to give to the daughters and sons left behind to mourn.

A few days later on my visit terminated, and I was obliged to return home. It cost me a pang to tear myself away from such a pleasant circle, and so many good friends, where I had passed the brightest and happiest autumn my life has yet known. Some day I hope to return to kind, hospitable little Denmark; and then, if God spares his life, I shall renew my friendship, among others, with this very distinguished writer and poet, Hans Christian Andersen.

The photograph he so often promised me I received on the eve of my departure, also one of his books, on the fly-leaf of which he had written a graceful and amiable remark on the pleasure our being guests in the same house had given him.

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Jean Vadé,

The Father of Madame Angot.

The immense gallery of minor French poets was enriched in the first half of the eighteenth century by the appearance of a jovial, genial, rubicund physiognomy that contrasted strangely with the pallid madrigal writers, the sighing Strephons, the severe disciples of Malherbe with which it was surrounded. And almost the last broad carnival grin died away when that face faded. Until then an asylum had never been wanting in France for the merry, generous, plain-spoken Muse of *La Gaudriole*. Before her first steps on the stage were taken, she sang in tavern and cabaret, and on the shaking boards of mountebanks' theatres. Her laughter spared nothing: it was ringing in the ears of Mazarin when he said, "Le peuple chante, mais il paiera." Molière came, and, transformed and rejuvenated, the Muse reappeared in Géronte, in M. Jourdain, in Sganarelle, and the '*Femmes Savantes*.' After Molière, lamed and laughing lover, she turned to Dancourt and Régnard, awaiting their last successor, her last lover (whatever Gouffé and Béranger may afterwards have essayed to prove), Jean Vadé, the Corneille of the market-place, the father of Madame Angot.

Among the festivals minutely recorded by the polite chroniclers, the Jenkins of the Louis Quinze era—those dainty historians who dismissed the English threatening Calais and the populace threatening the throne with a neatly-turned epigram—there was a carnival celebration, in 1747, at the Hôtel de Château-Renaud that moved the *nouvellistes* to ecstasies of lyrical enthusiasm. The Comtesse de Château-Renaud, these same old-world reporters inform us, had organised the festival—a masked ball—in honour of the return of the Comte de Caylus, her cousin, and something more than her cousin it was freely hinted. M. de Caylus was a dilettante in art and literature—a nobleman infected with the prevalent *bel esprit* mania—and the company was selected in accordance with his tastes. There was Duclos to meet him, Boucher the painter, Gentil-Bernard, Vanloo, Piron, Moncrif, Latour—a pleiad of wits, a Parnassus of poets, cunning with pen and pencil, the Bohemians in powder and laced coats, who were as essential to the dignity of a lady of quality as her pet monkey and favourite *abbé*. Madame de Château-Renaud's ball was not peculiar by reason of this assemblage of illustrious guests; genius was cheap under Louis Quinze—it came at the first

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beck of a noble hand, and wore a livery when its own coat was not threadbare. Beaumarchais had not yet raised it from its couchant attitude, Voltaire had not taught it to turn against its masters. But, when the dances had degenerated into distant foreshadowings of waltz and polka; when the buckram of etiquette began to show a crease or two, and the periwigs had not a few limp and disordered curls, a novel, incongruous element found its way into the company of wits and lords and ladies.

There was an irruption of the market-place into the saloons of the Comtesse de Château-Renaud—a stream from the gutter broke into the prevailing rose-water. A struggle at the door made the *rigodons* and *courantes* cease. A fishwife, portly, robust, and loud of voice, had presented herself at the ball-room door, and was endeavouring to force an entrance. And she seemed likely to succeed. With foot and fist applied dexterously and forcibly she beat back lacqueys and grooms of the chamber, the untameable tongue of the market-woman wagging freely and frankly the while. The ladies who admired Racan and frequented the Hôtel de Rambouillet, were ostensibly shocked, but possibly amused. For the first time the most sonorous epithets, the most explicit idioms of the *poissard* vocabulary were heard in the halls of the Château-Renaud. Saint Germain was set face to face with Saint Antoine—the salt smell of herring baskets, mingled with the musk on ermine muffs and velvet *roquelaures*. The Comte de Caylus advanced towards the intruder and politely demanded the reason of her visit. There was an exchange of courtesies—the one highly coloured, full flavoured, and picturesque, the other pompous and polished as the Regent's mignons could make such civilities. La Tulipe, the market-woman, had lost her lover, and, seeing the festive illumination at the Hôtel de Château-Renaud had resolved to replace him for the moment with the first "*beau muguet*" who would accept for a minuet the broad sinewy hand, covered with plain gold hoops, she offered. The minuet was executed—the robust grace of the *poissarde*, the easy elegance of the courtier, forming, we are told, a contrast that was not without a certain novel and piquant charm.

While the stately steps were being performed, wondering surmises went among the spectators; guesses were made, conjectures exchanged. It was soon discovered that the *poissard* costume was a disguise, at least, as to the sex of its wearer. What veritable market-man could have found his way into the patrician stronghold of the Château-Renaud, or would be dancing with the beautiful Comtesse to whom Louis Quinze had once proposed throwing his handkerchief? Had Vanloo not been present *en habit de cour*, he would have been accused of the mystification. But he was there, looking on and applauding, and apparently knew its author, for the result of his

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whispers was that ere the minuet had concluded, a name, familiar to the artists and *littérateurs* present, but unknown to the mass of the guests, passed from mouth to mouth: it was Vadé.

Jean Joseph Vadé was then seven-and-twenty. He was beginning to acquire a certain celebrity as the author of familiar madrigals addressed to tavern Hebes, nymphs of the pavement that had not yet figured in lyric verse. What the Abbé de Bernis did for Chloris, Vadé was achieving for Margot, the cabaret wench. Born at Ham, in 1720, he had been sent to Paris at an early age, and was able to make the study of the market ballads and dialect an important part of his first education. Indeed, he studied little besides, manifesting, while yet a schoolboy, the vagabond instincts, the irreverent wit of Villon, offering one of the first types of the perfect Gavroche that modern literary history has deigned to notice. He lived with his parents in the vicinity of the *Halles*. Like Callot, who in his childhood would drop his books to stroll after a gipsy caravan for half a day; like Teniers, who would stop with his satchel on his arm, to study the topers at the tavern doors; like Watteau, whose favourite pastime consisted in watching from his window the exercises of street acrobats, the gesticulations of itinerant charlatans; Jean Vadé spent the greater part of his schooldays in the company of fish-fags and market porters, in the study of their rich and racy vernacular. Despite this unpromising education, however, despite his incorrigible *insouciance*, he obtained in his twentieth year, by the help of influential family friends, the post of Comptroller at Soissons and Laon; and during four years the young Treasury official "*fit les délices*" of his district, writes the grave historian to whom we owe the only complete account of Vadé's life and works. But provincial life fettered and stifled the vagabond. In 1743, returning from a journey to Normandy, he found himself in Paris, and resolved to remain there.

His reputation had spread unto the Capital, from tavern to greenroom, from greenroom to boudoir; and the Capital had not so far forgotten the joyous masquerade of the Regency as to turn a dull or prudish ear to Vadé's bold satire and licentious gaiety. It became a fashion to offer him as an entertainment to one's guests, like a performance of fantoccini or a fantasia on the musical glasses. The Duc d'Angenois, who loved a little easy laughter, proposed to him an engagement as his private secretary; and Vadé, who loved an easy life, accepted; for he was without money, and his talents were not of a nature to prevent starvation, though they might help their possessor to starve good-humouredly. It was decided that the poet of the *Poissonnerie* should become the Duke's secretary at a salary of one hundred louis a year. Vadé was to accompany his employer wherever he went, and there his duties ended. The Duc

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had secured a constant boon companion, and at the same time increased his worldly importance by attaching a secretary to his household. The nature of the pact between the roué and the poet is sufficiently explained by the fact that M. d'Angenois himself organised the sudden invasion of Madame de Château-Renaud's ball-room. Together lord and secretary had perambulated the markets in search of a disguise, and at last hired the Sunday costume of the daintiest *dame des halles*. It sat well upon the comely figure of Jean Vadé; he was a fair representative of the "little bourgeoisie" from which he sprang, and in which the robust activity of the hind and artisan had not yet been curbed and drilled by masters of "polite deportment." Indeed, though he followed his employer into the very temples of elaborate etiquette, though he could study at home at all hours a model of all the courtly graces—and not a few of the courtly vices—in the person of the Duc d'Angenois, his instincts remained incorrigibly plebeian, his speech and manners never lost the abrupt plainness of the market-place. He might amuse the exquisites and *grandes dames* for whose entertainment he was occasionally exhibited, but his own amusement was found only in wine-shop and café, at Procope's, or the Carrefour Buci, where Piron, Panard, and the old Caveau met in some Bacchanalian and Apollonian orgie.

Madame de Château-Renaud's carnival ball was an important event in Vadé's life. After that minuet with M. de Caylus, the *poissard*'s days were equally divided between Margot and Madame de Millefleurs. He had been the companion of roystering courtiers before; thenceforth feminine influences led him. He was no longer the buffoon his companions never mentioned to wife or sister; but the intimate of noble houses, the squire of dames whose names d'Hozier traced lovingly and reverently. Womanhood was sick of the eternal musk and roses with which the century incensed it. Sedaine and Saint Lambert (Rousseau's rival in the good graces of Madame d'Houdelot) were agreeable thurifers, but they had swung the censers too long, and Bourbon noses were tilted like a soubrette's, breathing the monotonous odours. The *bouquets à Chloris* began to seem like immortelles—scentless and everlasting. It was a relief to turn to the effluvia of the market-place; it was a pleasant change to look nature in the face once more, even when nature wore a herring-woman's scaly apron, and disregarded the subjunctive moods. Jean Vadé was the Columbus of a new world, where the weary victims of Versailles and the noble Faubourg might find refreshment and solace for the insipidity of the old. Into that *terra incognita* poured a procession that had its fountain-head at the "Œil de Bœuf." The explorer found the fairest faces, the most voluminous *vertugadins* of France gathering around him. The marquises shed their pastoral disguises, dropped

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their shepherdesses' crooks, and adopted the cap and kerchief of the market-wenches. Vadé became the fashionable initiator into the mysteries of street-life and slang, a pet professor of the *poissard* dialect. The round, racy oaths roared in the Place St. Eustache were lisped in boudoir and ball-room; the morals had perhaps never differed much, and now the manners were growing similar.

In this revolution of fashion the poet who had originated it was carried onward with bewildering rapidity. His first and most enthusiastic pupil, Madame de Beaupré, was one of the madcap heroines of that feminine group of beauties that rustled round Louis Quinze's illegitimate queens. Unwittingly she fixed the tavern poet's fate. His novel eloquence struck her tired imagination that could conceive nothing beyond the pasteboard marvels of a Versailles "Ballet of the Four Elements." His hardihood, the ribaldry of his wit, were fresh, invigorating elements to introduce into the listless life of a bondswoman to etiquette and "les belles manières." The *poissard* was invited to Madame de Beaupré's hotel; in a few weeks he was a daily visitor, and St. Germain had a new subject for its commentation and criticisms. They were of little import in those days of lax morals and irrepressible gossip; and Madame de Beaupré followed Columbus unrestrainedly into the curious Utopia he had discovered for her. Piquant anecdotes are to be found in the memoirs of the time relating to the lovers' peregrinations in the St. Eustache quarter. Strange and not uniformly recreative adventures befel them in their explorations. Vadé had compromising acquaintances at every street corner, the Baronne had rivals at every stall of the markets, and the new love was not always spared by the old. The grand lady in patches and powder was a tempting target for the rude epigrams of *maraîchère*, poulterers, porters and fish-vendors. It was well the powder laid so thickly, and the patches were so numerous, for the allusions were not veiled, the humour owed nothing of its savour to euphemism or periphrasis. The *réplique courtoise* was not among the market-folk's weapons of defence.

They were a class apart, possessing its own immunities, granted by King and City at divers epochs; its recognised privileges, a freedom of life and industry such as no other corporation could boast. It claimed the right to kiss the Queen, to present nosegays to the Dauphin on his birthday, to petition the King directly, to elect their own police, and march in procession to the Louvre when a prince was born. They were unconscious democrats and revolutionists in their way before the meaning of the words had spread beyond the circle of the encyclopedists. The impulse that sent them shouting to Versailles in October 1789 with Reine Andu, the Queen of the Market, at their head, was the final expression of a deep-rooted spirit of rebellion. Vadé was one of themselves, their own *chansonnier*, and the most

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truculent virago knew that he could hold his own against her—at rhetoric or fisticuffs. But the Baronne was helpless; her cavalier could not defend them both. The intelligencers he had in the enemy's camp were anything but useful allies. There was Nicolle, the oyster-seller, a sweet, sunburnt, laughing Rubens, who wore the whitest *fichu*, the heaviest earrings, the largest gold cross in the Place St. Eustache, and whom Vadé had chosen for his Muse before Madame de Beaupré had inoculated him with a taste for vaporous Latour and Watteau. The muse waxed eloquent in very unclassical fashion at sight of the lady who had usurped her place. There was a war of words in the market-place in which the opponents were unequally matched, in which the academical wit of the Hôtel de Rambouillet was signally worsted by the plain speaking of Saint Antoine. But the battle ended harmlessly, albeit Vadé remained undecided between the two Muses, albeit Madame la Baronne secured her object in the end. If she bore malice, the rancour was not unprofitable to Nicolle. The revenge was simple. She suggested to M. de Montaignac, an unfortunate admirer, that Nicolle, the oyster-seller at Saint Eustache, was worth a compliment or two. The compliments were paid the next morning, and the little *marchande d'huîtres* was won. It was the footlights that attracted her. M. de Montaignac was an all-powerful patron of the drama, and the *débutante* he presented was sure of an engagement, and a cabal in her favour.

Accordingly, as one of Freron's articles announces, Mademoiselle Nicolle Delarue appeared for the first time on the boards of the Comédie Française, in 1748. It had gone abroad that the actress had been a *poissarde*, and curiosity drew large audiences. There was nothing but curiosity to attract the public. The joyous Muse of the market-place made an awkward and lifeless marionette. She was vehemently applauded during the first few nights, but gradually the popular verdict became manifest: youth and a fair presence, but no promise of talent. Vadé assisted at the first deceptive triumph from Madame de Beaupré's box, and he was not unfaithful when hisses succeeded the evanescent applause. The two left-handed marriages had lasted a year, an eternity in a love intrigue under Louis Quinze. They broke up to the satisfaction of all concerned. Mademoiselle Nicolle had secured a protector for her *début*, M. de Montaignac some months' amusement, and the glory of having given an actress to the Comédie Française. Madame de Beaupré had enjoyed a monopoly of the popular poet, and an insight into his special sphere; Vadé had obtained an introduction into Court circles, and made social and literary capital of his equivocal position as the favourite of a fashionable beauty. Each of the partners having attained his or her own ends, the illicit bonds fell apart. Nicolle retired from the Comédie Française, but not to her cap and cross and oyster-stall. She met

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Jean Vadé, and they were married with pomp and splendour at St. Germain des Prés. But the poet never forgot his brief triumph in the patrician faubourg. Unto the day of his death he kept the pocket-book garnished with golden feathers that accompanied the Baronne's letter of farewell. He even abandoned the *poissard* muse to acknowledge the souvenir, and proved that he could deal with "Cupid's darts," and "burning hearts," as deftly as the best of the rhyming abbés.

His marriage did not alienate Vadé's friends at Court. The Duc d'Angenois saw his jovial secretary depart with unfeigned regret, and exerted himself to procure for the poet a second nomination to his old post of Comptroller. And this time Vadé was able to remain in Paris. Still his means were narrow, and the advent of four or five children did not add to their elasticity. For the first time Vadé took up his pen as a bread-winner. Until then he had written as an amateur, rhyming couplets at dessert to please a heedless company of debauchees. Piron and Panard were easy Horatian philosophers only at dessert, and contrived to make their lyrical professions of jovial *insouciance* yield considerable pecuniary advantages. They had often advised Vadé to utilise his peculiar talent in the composition of operas for the popular theatres of the Foire Saint Laurent and the Foire Saint Germain. In his early days of vagabondage he had been one of the most assiduous spectators of these last refuges of the sixteenth century *Farces* and *Soties*. He knew their principal pieces by heart, the primitive scenes in which Arlequin, Cassandra and Columbine figured; the heroic absurdities of Cyrano de Bergerac, the broad burlesques of Scarron, as well as the contemporary productions of Piron, Panard, and Collé. The low, dark halls, begrimed with the smoke of candles, redolent of lamp-oil and garlic, were filled nightly by tumultuous audiences that formed a strong contrast to the patrons of the Royal houses. They required no Italian mechanical effects and illusions, no luxury of costume and scenery; they were realists in a certain primitive sense, and preferred men and women from the working faubourg to the nymphs and heroes of the legitimate drama patented by the King. They were the public Vadé knew and loved, the judges on whom the strong and pungent flavour of his literature would not be lost.

He followed the counsel given him, and between 1752 and 1757 furnished no less than eighteen comic operas to the two popular theatres. His first venture was an audacious parody of the classic opera '*Omphale*.' The most popular of his works were successively the '*Impromptu du Cœur*,' the '*Veuve Indécise*,' '*Le Poirier*,' '*Nicaire*,' '*Les Racoleurs*,' '*Le Trompeur Trompé*' (which was played once or twice in the early part of this century) '*Les Troyennes de Champagne*.' Grimm, Collé, Freron, and the rest of the critics attest that these pieces were for a time proverbial examples of popular wit. Their songs were

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considered inimitable, their satire irresistible. To the modern reader they appear immeasurably below their reputation. The wit is coarse, plain, and unsuggestive, the satire blunt and heavy as a battering ram, stunning its victims where Molière probed and punctured. The roughness of their literary style scarcely strikes the student of our day as indicative of any decided originality. Vadé's copyists have surpassed the master; the physiognomy of what the French parliamentarians call the "eccentric classes," their lives and language, have been described by Balzac and Henri Monnier with far greater freedom and fidelity than the best of their old *poissard* studies possess. But at the epoch when they were produced, Vadé's plays possessed a sovereign merit—they were innovations. They presented for the first time on the stage heroes that wore the livery of labour, that spoke of meaner things than moving armies and the vicissitudes of empires; that loved in homely fashion, whom the spectator could conceive fulfilling the prosaic functions of housewife, nurse, and cook—vulgarities that were banished from the broadest comedies of the Théâtre Français and Opéra Comique. They were noticed for this reason, they were popular for another: they pleased the growing democratic instincts of the populace and bourgeoisie, and the dilettante dabblers in art, letters, and sedition of the aristocracy. For around Vadé assembled representatives of all classes, his sworn supporters, and sometimes his rivals. The Abbé Voisenon claimed boldly a share of Vadé's contemporary renown, and essayed to demonstrate that, though its most distinguished professor, he was not the creator of the *Poissard* order of literature. "He was bitten with a noble emulation after reading the '*Etrennes de la Saint-Jean*,' the '*Œufs de Pâques*,' the '*Ecossaises*,' the '*Bals de Bois*,' the '*Fêtes Roulantes*.' The chief authors of these works were the Chevalier d'Orleans, Grand Prieur, Moncrif, Comte de Caylus, Crébillon the son,"—and thereunto the Abbé modestly adds his own name. The pieces cited are realistic only in their licentiousness. What the abbé called the *genre poissard* was a profusion of oaths and indecencies, and in that he was master. But it is true that at the time when Vadé wrote, many others were following and imitating him. Madame de Defant called his school—for "school" it was during many years—the "Tail of the Regency." It was, perhaps, the front of the Revolution. Twelve members composed it, noblemen and men of letters, Bacchanalians and Epicureans all, who said "Morgué!" and "Jarnidieu!" affecting the hoarse voice of the market-criers. They met for supper alternately at the houses of Mademoiselle Quinault, the actress, and the Comte de Caylus; and in payment of his entertainment each member was expected to compose a comic story or parody, which was subsequently printed. The collections thus obtained yielded sufficiently large profits to permit Mademoiselle Quinault to engage the

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most famous cooks in Paris. From these suppers proceeded many well known burlesques, such as the '*Bataille de Chiens*,' and '*Bataille des Dindons*,' by the Grand Prieur; the '*President Guillery*,' the '*Queue de Mouton*,' &c.

Vadé was an active member. One of his wittiest stories was composed on the following data given by the company: "The hero must be burnt, drowned, have the itch, and be hung—then marry his mistress. The heroine must have hydrophobia, be flogged, and throw herself out of window." Vadé left a volume of songs, tales, and fables, which are far superior to his *Poissard* pieces. And it is worthy of remark that they constitute the first attempt to revive the rich sonorous rhymes of the sixteenth-century poets—a renovation the Romantique school of 1830 at last effected. A famous drinking-song of Vadé's, which is still sung by the working classes, demonstrates this:—

"Je suis un Narcisse nouveau
Qui s'aime et qui s'admire,
Mais dans le vin et non dans l'eau
Sans cesse je me mire;
En y voyant le coloris
Qu'il donne à mon visage,
De l'amour de moi-même épris,
J'avale mon image."

Vadé died in 1759, and his friend Grimm, announcing the event in his correspondence, added the contemptuous words: "His death was the result of a dissolute life. I have never been able to discover M. Vadé's talent. He was familiar with the dialect of the *Halle*, and employed it without wit." The judgment may doubtless be partially endorsed. As *chansonnier*, vaudevillist, story-teller, Vadé has long ceased to exist, and on the whole, he deserved to die. But his name has remained as the symbol of a class of writings that could ill be spared, since it photographed a society that no historian had hitherto thought worth painting. It is difficult to perceive the humour of '*La Pipe Cassée—poëme épi-tragi-poissardi-héroi-comique*,' but it provoked in its day a peal of laughter that was more wholesome and innocent than the mirth of the *petits-maîtres* who deified Crébillon. And the Father of Madame Angot has bred some more modern humour that may lead even a few Puritans of literature to regret the early Muse—*forte en gueule*, her arms akimbo, whose satire did not at any rate lie in two-edged meanings and equivocal word-play.

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Ralph Wilton's Weird.

Chapter II.

Major Moncrief was as good as his word, and joined his friend before the stipulated ten days had expired. Nor had time hung heavily on Wilton's hands. He was up early, and turned out every day to tramp through the heather, or among the wooded valleys of the picturesque country surrounding the lodge. He was an active pedestrian and a good shot; moreover, he went thoroughly into the pursuit or amusement that engaged him. The gamekeeper pronounced him a real sportsman, but thought it rather odd that, whatever line of country they had beaten, or were going to beat, Colonel Wilton generally contrived to pass across the brae, or the path leading from Brosedale to Monkscleugh. The evening was generally spent in arranging and correcting his Crimean and Indian diaries, so, with the help of a couple of horses, which arrived under the care of his soldier servant, he had no lack of amusement and occupation. Nevertheless he welcomed Moncrief very warmly.

"You are a first-rate fellow for joining me so soon. It certainly is not good for man to live alone. These are capital quarters—lots of game, a beautiful country, hospitable neighbours. Look here! I found these when I came in yesterday."

So spoke Wilton, handing a card and a note to his friend as they drew near the fire after dinner.

"Hum! Ah! Sir Peter, or rather Lady, Fergusson has lost no time," returned the Major, laying down the card, which was inscribed "Sir Peter J. Fergusson, Brosedale," and opening the note, which bore a crest and monogram in lilac and gold. "Her ladyship is anxious we should partake of the hospitality of Brosedale on Thursday next, *sans cérémonie.* I am to bring my friend Colonel Wilton."

"Who are these people?" asked Wilton, as he peeled a walnut.

"Oh, Sir Peter is a man who made a big fortune in China; a very decent little fellow. He married an Honourable widow with a string of daughters, who manages a happy amalgamation of her old and her new loves by styling herself the Honourable Lady Fergusson. Sir Peter bought a large estate here for a song when the Grits of Brosedale smashed up. I met the baronet in London at General Maclellan's, and my lady was monstrously civil; hoped to see me when I was in their neighbourhood, and all that; but of course, Wilton, you will not go? We did not come down here for polite society—it would be a bore."

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Wilton did not answer immediately. "I do not know," he said at last. "It would not do to give such near neighbours the cold shoulder. We might be glad of them if we tire of each other. Suppose we go this time and see what sort of neighbours we have."

Moncrief looked at his friend with some surprise. "As you like," he said. "I should have thought it anything but a temptation to you."

"My dear fellow! The weather, and the sport, and the scenery have made me so confoundedly amiable, that I am indisposed to say No to any one."

"Very well! I will write and accept; but if you think I am going to dine with every resident who chooses to enliven his dullness by entertaining two such choice spirits as ourselves, you are very much mistaken, my lad. I suppose you are anxious to prosecute your search for a wife, in obedience to that crotchety old peer."

"Not I," returned Wilton, laughing; "and, if I were, I do not think it very likely I should find the desired article among the Honourable Lady Fergusson's daughters."

"I believe Fergusson was married before," said the Major—"in his earlier, humbler days, when he little thought he would reign in the stead of old Jammie Grits at Brosedale." Whereupon the Major branched off into some local anecdotes, which he told with much dry humour. Wilton listened and laughed, but did not forget to put him in mind of the necessary reply to Lady Fergusson's invitation.

The Major was by no means well pleased at being obliged to dress after a severe day's work, for which he was not as yet in training; moreover, he was full fifteen years older than his friend, and at no period of his life possessed the fire, the eager energy which Wilton carried with him into every pursuit, even into every whim. So he grumbled through the purgatorial operation, and marvelled gloomily at Wilton's unusual readiness to rush into the inanities of a county dinner.

As to Wilton, he felt quite angry with himself for the curious elation with which he mounted the dogcart that was to convey them to Brosedale. He did not think there was so much boyish folly left in him; but occupy himself as he might, he could not banish the haunting eyes of Ella Rivers. He could not forget the unconscious dignity of her question, "Is it death?" The full knowledge of danger, and yet no wild terror! There was a fascination about that insignificant stranger which, absurd and unreasonable though it was, he could not shake off. This effect was heightened by the peculiar, sad indifference of her manner. It was odd that he had never met her in any of his varied and extensive excursions. The weather had been beautiful, too—most favourable for sketching, but she had never appeared! If he could see her again, and disperse the species of

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mystery which formed part of her charm, by ascertaining who and what she was, he felt as if he could better break the spell. But all this was more vaguely felt than actually thought and acknowledged. Wilton would have laughed at any one who told him that his thoughts were all more or less pervaded by the quiet little girl who had shown such an unusual dislike to soldiers.

The friends reached Brosedale just as Sir Peter hoped they would not be late. The house—which was an old one, so largely added to, altered, and improved, that scarcely any of the original could be traced—was very like all rich men's houses where the women have no distinctive taste—handsome, ornate, and commonplace. Lady Fergusson was a fine, well-preserved woman, richly dressed in silk and lace. She received Major Moncrief and his friend with much cordiality, and presented them to her daughters, Miss Helen and Miss Gertude Saville, and also to a nephew and niece who were staying in the house. "My eldest daughter, who was with me when we had the pleasure of meeting you in town, is staying with her aunt, Lady Ashleigh, in Wiltshire," said the hostess to Moncrief. "She is quite enthusiastic about archæology, and Ashleigh is in itself a treasure of antiquity."

Miss Helen Saville was a grand, tall brunette, with rich red lips and cheeks, luxuriant if somewhat coarse black hair, and large round black eyes that looked every one and everything full in the face. Her sister was smaller, less dark, and in every way a faint copy of the great original. The niece was a plain girl with good points, dressed effectively; and the nephew, a young lieutenant in some hussar regiment, who considered himself bound to fraternise with Wilton. The latter was told off to take in Miss Saville by Sir Peter, a small man, whose close-clipped white whiskers looked like mutton-chops thickly floured. He had a quiet, not to say depressed, air, and a generally dry-salted aspect, which made Wilton wonder, as he stood talking with him before the fire, at the stuff out of which the conquerors of fortune are sometimes made.

"What a beautiful country this is!" said Wilton to his neighbour as his soup-plate was removed, and Ganymede, in well-fitting broadcloth, filled his glass.

"Strangers admire it, but it is by no means a good neighbourhood."

"Indeed. I suppose, then, you are driven in upon your own resources."

"Such as they are," with a smile, displaying white but not regular teeth.

"No doubt they are numerous. Let me see; what are a young lady's resources—crochet, croquet, and curates, healing the sick and feeding the hungry?"

"Oh, I do none of those things. The crochet, croquet, and

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curates are my sister's amusements, and I dislike both the sick and the hungry, although I have no objection to subscribe for them."

"Ah, you are terribly destitute; and you do not ride, or I should have met you?"

"Yes, I am very fond of riding; but we have scarcely returned a week, and I have had a bad cold."

"Perhaps you draw?" asked Wilton, approaching his object from afar.

"No; I have always preferred music. None of us care for drawing, except my youngest sister."

"Indeed," looking across the table, "that is a pleasant variety from the crochet, croquet, and curates."

"No; not Gertrude—I mean Isabel. She is still in the school-room."

"Ah, and I suppose sketches with her governess?"

"Yes."

"As I imagined," thought Wilton, "my pretty companion is the governess. Perhaps she will be in the drawing-room when we go there. If so, I must lay the train for some future meeting."

"Pray, Colonel Wilton, are you any relation to a Mr. St. George Wilton we met at Baden last summer? He was, or is, *attaché* somewhere."

"He has the honour of being my first cousin once removed, or my third cousin twice removed—some relation, at all events. I am not at all well up in the ramifications of the family."

"Well, he is a very agreeable person, I assure you, quite a favourite with every one, and speaks all sorts of languages. There was a Russian princess at Baden quite wild about him."

"Is it possible? These fair barbarians are impressionable, however. I have met the man you mention years ago. We were at that happy period when one can relieve the overburdened heart by a stand-up fight, and I have a delightful recollection of thrashing him."

Miss Saville laughed, and then said, "I hope you will be better friends when you meet again. I believe he is coming here next week."

"Oh, I promise to keep the peace—unless, indeed, I see him greatly preferred before me," returned Wilton, with a rather audacious look, which by no means displeased Miss Saville, who was of the order of young ladies that prefers a bold wooer.

While the talk flowed glibly at Sir Peter's end of the table, Lady Fergusson was delicately cross-examining Moncrief as to the social standing of his friend.

"Try a little melon, Major Moncrief. Pray help yourself. That port is, I believe, something remarkable. And you were saying Colonel Wilton is related to that curious old Lord St. George. We

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met a cousin of his—his heir, in fact—abroad last year, a very charming young man."

"Not his heir lady Fergusson, for my friend Ralph is the heir. I am quite sure of that."

"Indeed," returned Lady Fergusson, blandly. "I dare say you are right;" and her countenance assumed a softer expression, while she continued to bestow most flattering attentions upon the rather obtuse Major.

The after-dinner separation seemed very long to Wilton, although he was a good deal interested by his host's observations on Eastern matters; for Sir Peter was a shrewd, intelligent man; but at last they joined the ladies, and found their numbers augmented by a little girl of twelve or thirteen, and a rigid lady in grey silk, who was playing a duet with Miss Gertrude Saville. Wilton betook himself, coffee-cup in hand, to Miss Saville, who was turning over a book of photographs in a conspicuously disengaged position.

"I have had quite an interesting disquisition with your father on the East and China. He evidently knows his subject."

"Sir Peter is not my father," said the young lady, with a tinge of haughtiness.

"True. I forgot," apologetically. "Ah! that is your little artist sister. I am very fond of children."

"Are you? I am sure I am not, little, tiresome, useless animals."

"Human nature in the raw, eh?"

"Yes; I prefer it dressed."

"Still, to quote an inelegant proverb, 'Too much cookery spoils the broth.' But some is quite essential. Here, Isabel, take my cup." The little girl approached, and offered to take Wilton's also.

"No, not at any age could I permit such a thing," said he, laughing. "And so you are the artist in the house of Saville! Are you very fond of drawing?"

"I used not to be until—" she began to reply, when her sister interrupted her.

"Look, Isabel, Miss Walker wants you. Miss Walker (Hooky Walker, as my Cousin Jim calls her, because she has a hooked nose) is the governess. I think poor Isabel is a little afraid of her. She is awfully clever, and very slow."

Wilton looked at her in deep disappointment; the mystery was growing more difficult. Perhaps, after all, Ella Rivers did *not* live at Brosedale! Now he recalled all she had said, he found she had not positively asserted that she lived there, or anywhere. Could it be possible that she had slipped from his grasp—that he would never see her again—was she only the wraith of a charming, puzzling girl? Pooh! what was it to him? His business was to enjoy three or four months' sport and relaxation. He was so far fortunate. His

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chum Moncrief had pitched on excellent shooting-quarters for their joint occupation. His campaign had proved a very remedial measure, for he was quite clear of his debts, and the good intentions of Lord St. George formed a pleasing if uncertain perspective. So Wilton reflected, while Miss Helen Saville performed a tarantella of marvellous difficulty, where accidentals, abstruse harmonious discords, and double shakes appalled the listening ear. When it was finished the audience were properly complimentary, which homage the fair performer disregarded with a cool and lofty indifference highly creditable to her training in the school of modern young-ladyism.

"What an amount of study must be required to attain such skill!" said Wilton, as she returned to her seat near him. "Is it indiscreet to ask how many hours a day it took to produce all that?"

"Oh, not so very many. When I was in the school-room, I practised four or five; now much less keeps me in practice. Are you fond of music, Colonel Wilton?"

"Yes, I am extremely fond of it, in an ignorant way. I like old ballads, and soft airs, and marches, and all that low style of music suited to outside barbarians like myself." And Wilton, instinctively conscious that the brilliant Miss Saville admired him, bestowed a mischievous glance upon her as he spoke, not sorry, perhaps, to act upon the well-known principle of counter-irritation, to cure himself of the absurd impression made upon him by his chance encounter.

"I understand," returned Miss Saville, a little piqued, as he had intended she should be. "You look upon such compositions as I have just played as a horrid nuisance."

"Like a certain very bad spirit, I tremble and adore," said Wilton, laughing. "I have no doubt, however, that you could charm my savage breast, or rouse my martial fire, with 'Auld Robin Gray' or 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled.'"

"No, I cannot," replied Miss Saville haughtily. "Gertrude sings a little, and, I believe, can give you 'Auld Robin Gray,' if you ask her."

"I shall try, at all events," said Wilton, amused at the slight annoyance of her tone, and rising to execute his purpose, when Helen, to his surprise, forestalled him by calling her sister to her very amiably, "Gertrude, will you sing for Colonel Wilton? I will play your accompaniment." So the desired ballad was sung, very correctly and quite in tune, but as if performed by some vocal instrument utterly devoid of human feeling.

There was more music, and a good deal of talk about hunting arrangements; but Wilton was extremely pleased to be once more in the dogcart, cigar in mouth, facing the fresh, brisk breeze, on their homeward way. The Major, on the contrary, was in a far more happy frame of mind than at starting. He preferred hunting to shooting, and was highly pleased at the prospect of two days' hunting a week.

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"You are right, Moncrief," said Wilton, as they bowled away over the smooth, hard road; "these country dinners and family parties ought to be devoutly avoided by all sensible men."

"I do not know," returned the mentor. "I think they are a very tolerable lot; and I fancy you found amusement enough with that slashing, fine girl. You took very little notice of any one else, by Jove! I sometimes think I hate the lassies, they are such kittle cattle. Now a woman that's 'wooed and married and a'' is safe, and may be just as pleasant."

"I acknowledge the fact, but I object to the morality," returned Wilton, laughing.

"You do? I was not aware of your regeneration."

"Hallo!" cried Wilton. "There's some one on in front there, just under the shadow of that beech-tree."

"Yes, I thought I saw something. It's a child or a girl."

Wilton, who was driving, did not answer, though he drew up suddenly, and made a movement as if to throw aside the plaid that wrapped his knees, and spring down.

"What are you about? are you daft, man?"

"Nothing, nothing. I fancied—here, Byrne, look at this trace; it is loose."

"Sure it's all right, sir."

"Is it? Never mind." And Wilton, after casting an eager look up a pathway which led from the beech-tree into the grounds of Brosedale, gathered up the reins and drove rapidly home.

It was about a week after the Brosedale dinner that Wilton had sallied forth, intending to ride over to Monkscleugh. He had nearly resigned the idea of ever encountering his fair fellow-traveller again, though he could not shake off the conviction that the slight, dim figure which had flitted from out the shade of the beech-tree, across the moonlight, and into the gloom of the Brosedale plantations, was that of Miss Rivers. Still it was most strange that she should be there at such an hour—half-past ten at least—rather too enterprising for a young lady. Yet if Moncrief had not been with him he would certainly have given chase, and satisfied himself as to the identity of the child or woman who had crossed their path.

On this particular afternoon, however, Wilton's thoughts were occupied by the letters he had received that morning, one of which was from Lord St. George, who wrote to remind him of his promise to call when he passed through London again. The Viscount also mentioned that a former friend of his, the Earl of D——, would be in his (Wilton's) neighbourhood early in November, and would probably call upon him.

Wilton smiled as he read this, remembering that the Earl had

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three unmarried daughters. "A young gentleman," the writer continued, "calling himself St. George Wilton, left a card here some days ago, and was good enough to say he would call again, which enabled me to forbid his admittance. He did not repeat the attempt when he told my valet, whom he asked to see, that he was going to Scotland and would probably see Colonel Wilton, if I had any commands. I imagine my obliging namesake is a son of Fred Wilton, who was in the Navy—but not exactly the type of an honest, simple sailor. I would advise you not to be on too cousinly terms. I have heard, even in my cell, of the young gentleman's diplomatic astuteness."

Pondering on this epistle, and smiling at the sudden interest evinced towards him by the eccentric peer, Wilton rode leisurely towards Monkscleugh, enjoying the splendid golden evening tinge in the sky, the rich and varied hues of wood and moorland, when a sudden turn of the road brought him face to face with a slight grey figure, wearing a wide-brimmed hat, and carrying a small parcel. In an instant all the half-scorned but potent longings, the vivid picture-like recollections of tones and glances, that had haunted him even while he laughed at himself for being pervaded by them—all these absurd fancies he had so nearly shaken off, rushed back in a torrent and made his pulses leap at the immediate prospect of solving many mysteries.

He was dismounted and at her side in an instant. "I thought you had vanished—that I had lost you for ever," he exclaimed, with the sort of well-bred impetuosity peculiar to his manner, while, seeing that she made no motion to hold out her hand, he only lifted his hat.

The faint colour came to her cheek as she raised her eyes frankly to his, with a brighter, merrier smile than he had seen upon her lips before. "Nevertheless, I have not been very far away."

"Have you been at Brosedale all the time?—then how is it we have not met?"

"I cannot tell; but I have been at Brosedale."

Wilton threw the reins over his arm, and walked on beside her. "And are you all right again, recovered your fright, and had sleep enough?" looking at her eagerly as he spoke, and noting the soft lustre of her eyes, the clear, pale cheek, the ripe red, though not full, lips, all so much fairer and fresher than when they parted.

"Yes, I am quite well, and rested." A pause. She was apparently not inclined to talk more than she could help.

"Do you know, I quite expected to see you when I dined at Brosedale the other day—how was it you did not appear?"

"What! did you expect to see me at dinner? Do you, then, think I am a much disguised princess?"

"Not so very much disguised," he replied, rather surprised at her tone.

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She raised her eyes fully to his, with a look half amused, half scornful. "You might dine many times at Brosedale without seeing me. Do you know that Sir Peter Fergusson was married before, and he has one son, a poor crippled, often suffering boy of thirteen, I think? Well, this boy can do very little to amuse himself: he does not care for study, but he loves pictures and drawing, so I was engaged about a year ago to be—not his governess, I am too ignorant—not his companion, that would be a lady in waiting—but a 'souffre-douleur' and teacher of drawing. I live with my poor boy, who is never shown to visitors; and we are not unhappy together."

"I have heard of this son, but thought he was away; and you are always with him. Very fortunate for him, but what a life for you!"

"A far better life than many women have," she replied softly, looking away from him and speaking as if to herself.

"Still it is an awful sacrifice!"

She laughed with real, sweet merriment. "That depends on what has been sacrificed. And you," she went on with the odd independence of manner which, had her voice been less soft and low, her bearing less gentle, might have seemed audacious, "do you like Glenraven? Have you found many lovely bits of scenery?"

"I am charmed with the country; and were I as fortunate as young Fergusson in a companion, I might even try my 'prentice hand at sketching."

"If you will not try alone, neither will you even if Claude Lorraine came to cut your pencils."

"I wish," said Wilton, "I had a chance of cutting yours."

"But you have not," she returned, with a sort of indolent gravity not in the least coquettish, and a pause ensued. Wilton had seldom felt so adrift with any woman; perfectly frank and ready to talk, there was yet a strange half-cold indifference in her manner that did not belong to her fair youth, and upon which he dared not presume, though he chafed inwardly at the mask her frankness offered.

"I suppose you are kept very much in the house with your—pupil?" asked Wilton.

"Sometimes; he has been very unwell since I came back. But he has a pony-carriage, and he drives about, and I drive it occasionally; but it pains him to walk, poor fellow! He is interested in some things. He wished much to see you and hear about the Crimea and India."

"I am sure," cried Wilton with great readiness, "I should be most happy to see him or contribute to his amusement; pray tell him so from me."

"No, I cannot," with a shake of the head. "Lady Fergusson is so very good she thinks everything wrong; and to walk upon a country

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road with a great man like you would be worse than wrong—it would be shocking!"

Wilton could not refrain from laughing at the droll gravity of her tone, though in some indefinable way it piqued and annoyed him.

"Well, they are all out of the way—they have driven over to A——. Have they not?"

"Yes, and therefore there was no one to send to Monksclough to choose some prints that Donald wanted very much for a screen we are making, so I went."

"And so at last I had the pleasure of meeting you. I had begun to fear I should never have a chance of asking if you had recovered your fright; for though no woman could have shown more pluck, you must have been frightened."

"I was, indeed, and I do not think I am naturally brave; but I must bid you good morning—my way lies through the plantations."

"No, no, you must not send me adrift—are we not comrades? We have faced danger together; and I am sure you are not influenced by Lady Fergusson's views."

"Lady Fergusson! pooh!"

There was wonderful, airy, becoming grace in the pout which seemed to blow defiance like a kiss to the immaculate Lady Fergusson. "Nevertheless, I must say good-bye, for your horse could not get through that."

She pointed to a small swing-gate, which opened from the road to a path across a piece of rough heath-grown ground, between the road and the woods.

"Do you forbid me to escort you further?" said Wilton quickly.

She thought an instant. "Were I going to walk along the road I should not," the faintest colour stealing over her cheek as she spoke; "it is pleasant to talk with a new person sometimes, but I cannot alter my route."

Wilton laughed, and mounting rapidly, rode to the farther side of the wide waste border, where there was almost a small common; rousing up his horse he rushed him at the fence separating Sir Peter's land from the road, and landed safely within the boundary just as his companion passed through the gate.

She gave a slight suppressed scream, and as he again dismounted and joined her she looked very pale.

"How could you be so foolish as to do so!" she exclaimed, almost angrily. "You have frightened me."

"I am extremely sorry, but you can know little of country life; any man accustomed to hunt, and tolerably mounted, could have done as much."

She shook her head and walked on in silence, most embarrassing to Wilton. "I hope I have not displeased you," he said earnestly,

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trying to look into her eyes ; "but I thought I had your permission to accompany you a little farther."

"Yes, but who could imagine you would commit such an eccentricity as to take a leap like that?"

"I do not allow it was an eccentricity; I suppose you absolve me?"

"*Absolvo te!*—and the horse also. What a beautiful horse; how gently he follows you! I should so much like to sketch him. I fear I do not sketch animals well; I do not catch their character. Oh, could I sketch him now!" stopping short, and speaking with great animation. "Ah, I am too unreasonable—how could I ask you?" The faint, flitting blush that gave so much charm to her countenance, the sudden lighting up of her dark eyes with childlike eagerness, so unlike their usual expression of rather sad indifference, fascinated Wilton strangely; it was an instant before he replied, "Of course you shall sketch him; I have nothing to do, and am very glad to be of any service to you."

"Thank you, thank you very much! See," as she hastily unfolded her parcel, "I had just bought a new sketch-book, and you have provided a frontispiece." She seated herself on one of the large grey stones that dotted the piece of ground they were crossing, and quickly pointed a pencil. "There, turn his head a little towards me—not quite so much; that will do."

For some time Wilton stood still and silent, watching the small, white, deft fingers as they firmly and rapidly traced the outline or put in the shading with broad, bold strokes; occasionally he quieted the horse with a word, while he stored his memory with the pretty, graceful figure, from a tiny foot half buried in the soft short grass to the well-set, haughty head and neck. "It is curious," he thought; "here is a girl in almost a menial position with all the attributes of race, and a pair of eyes a king's daughter might pine to possess. Who can she be? What is her history? Why did she venture out alone when she ought to have been going to bed? I shall ask her." These ideas passed through Wilton's brain, although any clear continuity of thought was considerably impeded by the intermittent glimpses of a pair of full deep blue eyes, alternately upturned and downcast.

Suddenly Wilton was ordered, "Look away, over your horse's neck;" and when, having preserved this position for several moments, he attempted to resume a more agreeable attitude, he was met with an eager "Pray be still for a little longer."

At last he was released. "There," said his new acquaintance, "I will keep you no longer; you have been very kind. See, how have I done it."

Wilton looked eagerly at the page held out to him. "It is wonderfully good for so hasty a sketch," he said; "the head and

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fore-leg are capital, and, as far as I can judge, the likeness to the back of my head first-rate."

"I can generally catch the likeness of people," she returned, looking at the page and touching it here and there.

"Was that the reason you told me to look away?" asked Wilton, smiling.

"No! I did not wish your face in my book." Then colouring and looking up: "Not that I forget your kindness to me. No! But, you understand, if Lady Fergusson found Mr.—that is Colonel—Wilton's face in my book, it would be the most shocking—the superlative shocking! Ah! there is no word enormous enough for such a 'shocking!'" And she laughed low but merrily. Wilton found it catching and laughed too, though it puzzled him to reply. She went on: "You would have come in better for the picture had you had your soldier's dress on, holding the horse and looking thus; and, then, with some bright colouring, it might have been called 'On the Alert,' or some such thing, and sold for a hundred pence. I have seen these sort of sketches often in picture-shops." She spoke quickly, as if to cover a slight embarrassment, as she put away her pencils and book.

"Well, Miss Rivers, both Omar here and myself will be most happy to sit, or rather stand, for you whenever you like."

"Ah! I shall never have another opportunity," she replied, walking towards the next fence and swing-gate which led into the wood.

"You threatened as much, when I bid you good-bye, that I was never to see you again, and yet we have met; so I shall not be utterly downcast by your present prophecy."

She did not reply for a minute, and then exclaimed: "Suppose I were ever to succeed in making painting my career, would you, when you are a great nobleman—as Miss Saville says you will be—sit to me for your picture? And then we should have in the catalogue of the year's Exhibition, 'Portrait of the Earl—or Duke—of Blank, by Ella Rivers.'"

"I can only say I will sit to you when and where you will."

"Ah! the possibility of independent work is too charming. But I forget myself—what o'clock is it?"

"Quarter to three," said Wilton, looking at his watch.

"Then I have been out too long. See how low the sun is! What glorious sunset hues! But I must not stay. Oh, how I hate to go in! How I love the liberty of the open air—the free, unwalled space! I feel another being in the prison of a great house. If you met me there, you would not know me. I should not dare to look up; I should speak with bated breath, as if you were a superior. Can you fancy such a thing?"

"No; the wildest stretch of my imagination could not suggest such

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an idea. But can you not keep out a little longer?" There was a strained, yearning look in her eyes that touched Wilton to the heart.

"Impossible! My poor Donald will be cross and wretched. And you—you must go. I am foolish to have talked so much."

"You must let me come a little farther; that fence up there is considerably stiffer than the last, but I think Omar will take it."

"No! no! no!" clasping her hands.

"Yet you are not easily frightened. A young lady that can venture on a moonlight ramble when less adventurous people are going to bed must have strong nerves."

"Did you recognise me, then?" she interrupted, not in the least disturbed by his question, but offering no explanation of her appearance at such an hour. "Yes, I am not cowardly in some things. However, I must say good-morning."

"And you will not permit me to come any farther?"

"No." He felt her 'No' was very earnest. "Nay more, I will stay here until I see you safe at the other side of that fence again."

There was a quaint, unembarrassed decision in her tone that somewhat lessened the pleasure with which he heard her.

"I assure you, it is not worth your while to watch so insignificant a feat of horsemanship; that fence is a nothing."

"It does not seem so to me. It is possible an accident might happen, and then you would have no help. It would not be right to go on, and leave you to chance."

"If you will then, I shall not keep you long. But, Miss Rivers, shall you not want to visit Monkscleugh soon again? Have you abjured the picturesque braes of Glenraven? Is there no chance of another artistic talk with you?"

"No! Scarce any probability of such a thing. Good-bye! I am much obliged for the sketch you granted me. My good wishes!"—a slight, proudly-gracious bend of the head—"but go!" She stood with her parcel tightly held, not the slightest symptom of handshaking; and, bold man of the world as he was, Wilton felt he must not presume to hold out his; he therefore sprang into the saddle and was soon over the fence and on the road. He raised his hat, and received a wave of the hand in return.

He remained there till she vanished through the gate, and then, touching his impatient horse with the heel, rode at speed to Monkscleugh, whence, having accomplished his errand, he made a considerable détour; so that evening had closed in, and the Major was waiting for dinner when he reached the Lodge.

"Where have you been?" demanded his hungry senior. Wilton replied by an elaborate description of his progress, minus the leading incident. The care he took to mislead his friend and mask his own movements was surprising almost to himself. Yet, as he reflected,

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what was there in the whole adventure to conceal? No harm certainly. Nor was Moncrief a man who would jest coarsely, or draw wicked inferences. Still it was impossible that he or any man could understand the sort of impression Ella (it was extraordinary how readily her name came to his mind) had made upon him, unless he knew her; and even then, what opinion would a cool, shrewd, common-sense fellow like Moncrief form? He (Wilton) himself was, he feared, an impressionable idiot, and no doubt exaggerated effects. Nevertheless, those soft deep eyes, with their earnest yearning expression, haunted him almost painfully. If he could see them again, perhaps the effect would wear off; and, without thinking of the consequences, he most resolutely determined to see her as soon as he could possibly manage to do so, without drawing down any unpleasantness on that curious, puzzling, piquante girl. Major Moncrief little imagined the vivid gleams of recollection and conjecture which ever and anon shot athwart the current of his companion's ideas, as he took his part in a discussion on the probable future of the army in India with apparent interest and even eagerness. The Major's intelligence was keen so far as it went, but that was not far; therefore, though good comrades and excellent friends, they seldom agreed in opinion. Wilton's mental view being greatly wider: the result of the difference being that Moncrief considered Wilton "a fine fellow, but deucedly visionary—unpractical, in short," except in regimental matters; while Wilton spoke confidentially of the Major as "a capital old boy, but blind as a bat in some directions."

"Well, I maintain that we will never have such men again as the soldiers and diplomates trained under the old Company. Why, even the officers of humbler grade—the Jacobs and Greens, to say nothing of Edwards and a lot more—have very few equals in the Queen's service."

"True enough," replied Wilton, a little absently. "We have too much pipe-clay and red tape." So spake he with his lips, while his brain was striving busily to solve the question, "What could have brought her out at night through the lonely woods? Was it possible that any motive less strong than an appointment with a lover could have braced a slight, nervous girl (for, though plucky, she is nervous) to such an undertaking? But if she cared enough for any one to dare it, it would be worth braving a good deal to meet her." The picture suggested was rather fascinating; for the Major exclaimed, "I say, Wilton, are you asleep?" and brought their discussion to an end.

Chapter III.

Another week passed rapidly over, assisted in its flight by two capital runs with the Friarshire hounds and a dinner at a neigh-

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bouring magnate's, where Wilton made himself marvellously agreeable to Helen Saville and promised to ride with her next day; but neither at luncheon nor in the house or grounds did he catch a glimpse of Ella Rivers: again she had totally disappeared.

Miss Saville did not find Wilton so pleasant a companion either during their ride, or the luncheon which preceded it, as he had been at dinner the day before.

The accomplished Miss Walker and her pupil joined the party, but no other junior member of the family. "What an infamous shame," thought Wilton, "not to let that poor boy have a little society." However, fortune was not quite inexorable. As Wilton rode up to the door on their return, intending to bid the young ladies under his escort good-bye, he became aware of a small figure, with a large head and prominent eyes, standing on the threshold supported by crutches, while a pony-carriage was just disappearing towards the stables.

"What a nuisance," said Helen to Gertrude. "I wonder what that boy wants."

"Well, Donald, you ought not to stay here after your drive. You will take cold," said Miss Saville.

"Never you mind," retorted the boy in a shrill, resentful voice. "I want to speak to Colonel Wilton."

"To me," said Wilton, coming forward.

"Yes. I have asked them all to bring you to see me, and they won't. I believe they'd like to smother me altogether. Will you come and see me and Ella? I want to hear about a battle and lots of things."

He spoke with a sort of querulous impetuosity.

"I shall be most happy to rub up my recollections for your benefit," said Wilton good-humouredly, and taking the hand which the little cripple contrived to hold out to him.

"When will you come? To-morrow?"

"I am afraid I cannot," replied Wilton, remembering an engagement with Moncrief and speaking with very genuine regret.

"Well, the day after?"

"Oh, don't tease, Donny," cried Gertrude Saville.

"The first time Colonel Wilton comes over to luncheon I will ask him to come and talk to you," said Helen.

"Colonel Wilton, will you just ask for me—Master Fergusson. In the old times, I would be 'Master of Brosedale.' I shall never see you if you do not."

"Depend upon my calling on you," returned Wilton, smiling.

"And soon?"

"Yes, very soon."

Without another word the unfortunate heir of so much wealth turned and limped into the hall with surprising rapidity.

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"How annoying!" cried Gertrude.

"What an awful bore!" said Helen. "Really, Colonel Wilton, I am quite vexed that he should intrude himself upon you."

"Why! I do not see anything vexatious in it."

"You are too good. Do you know that boy is the bane of our existence?"

"Do you wish me to shoot him?" asked Wilton, laughing. "I really cannot wait to do so at present, so good-morning, though closing shades almost compel me to say good-night."

* * * * * * *

It was nearly a week before Wilton permitted himself to accept the invitation given him by the heir of Brosedale, and, in the interim, he dined at D—— Castle. The Ladies Mowbray were pleasant, unaffected girls, considerably less imposing and more simple than Helen Saville.

"These are exactly the style of women to please Lord St. George," thought Wilton, as he walked over to Brosedale a day or two after. "And very much the style to please myself formerly; but at present—no. I am wonderfully absorbed by this temporary insanity, which must not lead me too far." Musing in this strain he reached the grand house, where Lady Fergusson and her daughters received him in rich silk morning costumes, very becoming and tasteful, but somehow not so pleasant to his eye as the pretty fresh print dresses of Lord D——'s daughters.

Sir Peter came in to luncheon, which he did not always. His presence generally produced a depressing effect upon his fair step-daughters, and Wilton began to fear that no one would give him an opening to fulfil his promise to the crippled boy. At last he took the initiative himself; and when Sir Peter paused in an exposition of the opium trade, Wilton addressed Helen:

"You must not let me break my promise to your brother—step-brother, I mean."

"How! what!" exclaimed Sir Peter to his wife. "Has he seen Donald?" He spoke in a sharp, startled tone.

"The young gentleman introduced himself to me at the entrance of your hospitable mansion the other day, and expressed a wish to hear my warlike experiences, so I promised to give him a *séance*."

"You are very good," said Sir Peter, slowly, looking down. "Donald has but few pleasures, poor fellow!"

After this all the talk died out of the little baronet, and he soon rose and left the room.

"Indeed!" cried Gertrude, as the door closed on her step-father, "Donald has tormented us ever since to know when you were coming to see him. You had better take Colonel Wilton to the schoolroom, Helen, and have done with it."

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"I am quite ashamed of troubling you, Colonel Wilton," said Lady Fergusson. "But that boy's whims are very absurd, and Sir Peter is very weak, I must say."

"However, we have had quite a respite since little Miss Rivers came down," interrupted Helen Saville. "She manages him wonderfully. You cannot think what a curious pair they are together. You have seen Donald; and Miss Rivers, though not absolutely plain, is a cold, colourless little thing, generally very silent."

"But she can tell stories delightfully," cried Isabella; "she makes Donald laugh and be quite good-humoured for hours together."

"I fear," interrupted the accomplished Miss Walker, "that if my young charge is too much with Master Fergusson and his companion, her mind will be quite occupied with a very useless array of fairy tales and legends, more calculated to distort than to illustrate historic truth."

"I am sure you are right, Miss Walker. Isabella, you must not go into Donald's room without Miss Walker's permission," remarked Lady Fergusson.

"And she will never let me," said Isabella, with a very rebellious pout.

"Well, well, let us get this visit over," cried Helen, rising. "I will see if he is in the house and visible."

"You cannot think what a nuisance that poor boy was to my girls at first, and how well they bore with him, particularly Helen," said Lady Fergusson. "I am sure Miss Walker did the State great service when she found little Miss Rivers. She suits Donald wonderfully, though she is an oddity in her own way also."

Miss Walker murmured something about "being happy," but her tone was melancholy and uncertain, as though she thought the introduction of an element at variance with historic truth was a doubtful good.

Wilton made no direct reply; he was curious to ascertain if Miss Rivers had mentioned him, and anxious in any case to play into her hands.

Helen Saville returned quickly. "Yes," she said, "Donald is at home and will be highly pleased to see you."

Wilton accordingly followed her through various well-warmed and carpeted passages to a handsome room on the sunny side of the house, which was the dwelling-place of the heir. Books and music, a piano, drawing materials, globes, pictures, maps, all appliances for amusement and study, gave a pleasant aspect to the apartment. The boy was seated in a chair of elaborate make, furnished with a desk and candle-holder, and which could be raised or lowered to any angle. His crutch lay at hand, and he seemed engaged in drawing. He was plain and unattractive enough—a shrivelled-looking frame, a large

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head, wide mouth, projecting brow—all the characteristics of deformity. Even large and glittering eyes did not redeem the pale, wan face, over which gleamed a malign expression by no means pleasant to a stranger.

"I thought you would never come," he exclaimed bluntly, in a harsh, querulous voice, and holding out his hand.

"You will accept me now I am here, I hope," said Wilton, smiling.

"Oh, yes; I am very glad to see you."

"You are an artist, I see?"

"I hope to be one. Look here."

Wilton approached his desk. A sketch lay upon it. A confused mass of figures, apparently intended for a desperate battle.

"This," continued Donald, "is what I wanted you for. This is a study for a large picture in oils (I will begin it when I am a little stronger) of the battle of Balaklava. Nothing has ever been made of this subject, and I want to make something of it; so I thought you would just look at my sketch and see if I have caught an idea of the scene, and correct any incorrectness that strikes you."

"I should be most happy to help you," returned Wilton, looking hopelessly at the crowd of forms before him; "but I fear my capabilities are not quite equal to the task. In the first place, I was not in the Balaklava affair, and then one's recollections of a battle are not very clear."

"If confusion is a true likeness, Donny's picture will be remarkably successful," said Miss Saville, with a grave manner. Her words brought a flush to the boy's pale brow.

"I wish you would go away," he said rudely and abruptly. "I can never talk about anything when you are by."

"To hear is to obey," replied Miss Saville, rising; "only do not try Colonel Wilton's patience too much."

"Go! go!" returned Donald almost fiercely.

Wilton could not refrain from smiling as she left the room.

"I hate those Savilles!" cried Donald, observing it; "and so would you if you lived in the house with them."

"That is a subject on which we shall never agree. Let us return to your picture," said Wilton, thinking what a thorough "sell" it would be if Ella Rivers never made her appearance; for, with all his surface easy good-nature, Wilton did not fancy sacrificing even a small share of his time to an ill-natured imp like this.

"Look here. I have made this Hussar grasp a Lancer by the throat, and thrust a sword into his side. Will that do?"

"I see. Well, hardly. You know both the Hussars and Lancers were our men, therefore you must not make them fight; and here you have not the Russian uniform quite correctly. I think I have

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some sketches of the Russians that would help you. But is it not rather ambitious for such a youngster as yourself to aim at historical painting?"

"That is what Ella says; but it is my only chance of fame." The word on his lips was suggestive of sadness, and Wilton looked at the frail form, the pallid face, the thin, tremulous, feverish fingers with compassion. Before he could reply, a door behind him opened softly. "Oh, come here, Ella!" cried Donald. Wilton turned quickly, and just caught a glimpse of a grey skirt vanishing. "Ella, come back! Ella! Ella!" screamed the boy, with a sort of angry impatience that would not be denied.

"I am here, then," she said, reopening the door and coming in.

Wilton felt his (not inexperienced heart) throb as she approached, her cheek warm with a soft flitting blush, a slight smile upon her lips, but her large eyes grave and calm. It was the first time Wilton had seen her indoors, and the delicate dignity of her look, especially the setting on of her head, charmed him. The excessive simplicity of her perpetual grey dress could not hide the grace of her slim, round form, and yet he could well imagine that the vulgar common taste that looks for rich colour and striking outline might consider the quiet moonlight beauty of this obscure girl something almost plain.

Wilton greeted her silently as she approached with a profound bow. She acknowledged him.

"I did not know you had any one with you," she said to her pupil.

"Do you know Colonel Wilton?" he asked sharply.

"He was in the train with me when the collision occurred," she replied quietly, the colour fading away from her cheek, and leaving it very pale.

"Why did you not tell me?"

"There was nothing to tell, and you never asked me about my adventures."

"This young gentleman is very ambitious," said Wilton, to change the subject. "He is designing to immortalise himself and the 'The Six Hundred' at once."

"He will not have patience. I tell him that even the greatest genius must wait and work." She sighed as she spoke. "Besides, it is almost desecration for art to bestow itself on such a subject."

"There!" cried the boy passionately, "you always discourage me; you are cruel! Have I so much pleasure or hope that you should take this from me?"

She rose from the seat she had taken and came to him, laying her hand on his shoulder with a wonderfully tender gesture. "I do not discourage you, *caro!* You have much ability, but you have scarce fourteen years. Twenty years hence you will still be young, quite

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young enough to paint men tearing each other to pieces, with immense success. Now, you must learn to walk before you can fly upon the wings of fame. Let us put this away."

"No; you shall not. As to twenty years hence, do not talk of them to me."

The fierce, complaining tone passed from his voice, and he leant back, raising his eyes to hers with a yearning, loving, sad expression that struck Wilton with strange jealousy. The boy was old for his years, and perhaps, unknown to himself, loved his gentle companion with more than brotherly love. The idea chafed him, and to banish it he spoke:

"Why not make separate studies for your figures? It will practise your hand, and make material for your picture. I will send you over the Russian views and figures I have; they will help you as to costume and scenery."

There was a pause. Wilton was determined not to go away; and Donald, the fire gone from his eyes, his very figure limp, would not speak. At last Miss Rivers, who was arranging a box of colours, said: "This gentleman—Colonel Wilton's suggestion is very good. Suppose you act upon it. And perhaps he will come again, and see how you go on." She looked at Colonel Wilton as she spoke, and he tried to make out whether she wished him to return, or to give him the opportunity of escape. Although not inclined to underestimate himself, he came to the latter conclusion; but did not avail himself of it.

"You have something more to show me, have you not?" he asked kindly.

"Yes; plenty much better," answered Ella Rivers for him; and slipping away the fatal battle scene, she replaced it with a portfolio full of sketches very unequal in merit. Ella quickly picked out the best, and Donald appeared to cheer up under the encouragement of Wilton's praise.

"Show your sketch of 'Dandy,' said the boy to Ella. "She draws very well. Bring your portfolio, Ella," he went on.

"It is not necessary. You are keeping Colonel Wilton."

"You are not, indeed. I rather fancy you wish to get rid of me, Miss Rivers."

"Miss Rivers! Miss Rivers! How did you know her name?"

"I? Oh, I have heard it several times! Your sister mentioned Miss Rivers to-day at luncheon."

"Show your book, Ella, at all events."

She went to a distant table, after a full, searching look at Colonel Wilton, and brought the book he well remembered.

"Here is a capital likeness of my pony and my father's pet skye. But, Ella, you have torn out a page, the first one. Why?"

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"Because it pleased me to do so." She spoke very composedly; but the colour went and came faintly in her cheek.

"Do tell me why, Ella," with sharp, angry entreaty.

"I will *not*, Donald. You are tyrannical."

His eyes flashed, but he controlled himself.

"Is not this capital?" he asked, holding out the book.

"Very good—first-rate," returned Wilton, looking at two admirably-drawn figures of a pony and dog.

"It is better. I want to improve in animals," said Ella, looking down upon the page; and a little conversation ensued respecting this line of art, in which Donald took no share. Suddenly Ella looked at him: "You are ill! you are suffering!" she exclaimed, darting to his side and putting her arm round his neck, while, pale as death and half fainting, he rested his head against her breast.

"Pray bring me that phial and glass from the cabinet," she said quickly. Wilton obeyed; he held the glass while she poured out the right quantity; he took the bottle again, while she held the glass to the poor boy's lips; he assisted to lower the wonderful chair till the weary head could be gently placed in a restful position—all without a word being exchanged; then Ella took the poor thin hand in hers, and felt the pulse, and stroked it.

Donald opened his eyes: "Ella, I am better; ask him to say nothing about it."

"I will, dear Donald; I will." Then turning to Wilton: "Come; I will show the way."

The moment they crossed the threshold she exclaimed: "It will be better to say nothing about it; Lady Fergusson would only come and make a fuss and torment him; so I troubled you instead of ringing; but I do not apologize. You would willingly help him, I am sure."

"Yes, of course; but what a responsibility for you!"

"Oh, I understand him, and I often see the doctor! Ah, what a life! what suffering! what a terrible nature! But I must not stay. You—you were prudent—that is—pooh! I am foolish. I mean to say, I am glad you scarce appeared to know me. I say nothing of myself here; I am an abstraction, a machine, a companion! Good-bye." For the first time she held out her hand, with a gracious, queenly gesture. Wilton took and held it. "One moment," he said quickly. "Shall I never have another chance of a word with you in the free air? Is there no errand to Monkscleugh that may lead to a rencontre?"

"If I meet you," she said, "I will speak to you; but it is, and must be, a mere chance. Follow that corridor, turn to the left, and you will be in the hall. Good-bye." She was gone.

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"Well, what sort of fellow is this cousin of yours? I suppose you met him last night? I never thought we should tumble into the trammels of polite society when I recommended these shootings to you. I have scarcely seen you the last ten days. What's come to you, lad?"

So growled Moncrief one morning as he smoked the after-breakfast cigar, previous to turning out for a run with the "Friarshire."

"Oh! St. George Wilton is rather an amusing fellow; he is tolerably good-looking, and has lots of small talk; one of those men who does not believe much in anything, I fancy, except self and self-interest, but for dear self-sake not disposed to rub other people the wrong way. He is a favourite with the ladies—cuts me out with the fair Helen."

"Hum! I doubt that. I do not think you would let him, if he tried; for of course *that's* the attraction to Brosedale."

"Is it?" returned Wilton carelessly, as he prepared a cigar.

"Yes; I know you think I am as blind as a mole, but I can see there is something that takes you to Brosedale. It's not Sir Peter, though he is the best of the lot. It's not my Lady; and it cannot be that imp of a boy you are so fond of carrying pictures to. I suppose for a 'ploy to get into the interior, though they are sweet enough upon you without that; so it must be that girl."

"Your reasoning is so admirable," returned Wilton, laughing good-humouredly, "that I should like to hear a little more."

"Eh!" said the Major, looking up at him curiously. "Well, my lad, I am only anxious for your own sake. Helen Saville is not the style of woman Lord St. George would like; the family are by no means *sans reproche;* and—I don't fancy her myself."

"That is conclusive," replied Wilton gravely. "But make your mind easy; I am not going to marry Helen Saville, nor do I think she expects me to do so."

"What she expects, God knows, but there is something not all square about you, Wilton."

"My dear fellow, do you want me to call you out?"

"You must just go your own way, which, no doubt, you would in any case; but I am off on Monday next to pay my sister a visit. I have put her off from time to time, but I must go now."

"By Jove, I shall be quite desolate! And will you not return, old fellow?"

"I think not. At any rate I shall not be able to come North again till near Christmas; and I hardly suppose you will be here then."

"That depends," said Wilton thoughtfully.

"On what?" asked the Major quickly.

"Oh! the sport—my own whims—the general attractions of the neighbourhood."

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"—— the attractions of the neighbourhood!" cried Moncrief profanely. "Why do you not make up to Lady Mary or Lady Susan Mowbray? They are nice girls, and no mistake; just the very thing for you. But I am a fool to trouble myself about you; only I have always looked after you since you joined. However, you are old enough to take care of yourself."

"Perhaps! I ought to be, at any rate; and although I have somehow managed to 'rile' you, I have never forgotten, and never will forget, what a brick you have always been."

Major Moncrief growled out some indistinct words, and went to the window; Wilton followed him. "You'll scarcely manage a run to-day," he said; "the ground is very hard, and, if I am not much mistaken, there's a lot of snow up there," pointing to a dense mass of heavy drab clouds to windward.

"No," returned Moncrief, uncertainly, "it is considerably milder this morning; besides, the wind is too high, and it is too early for snow."

"Not in these latitudes; and it has been deucedly cold for a week past."

"At any rate, I will go to the meet," said Moncrief, leaving the room. "What are you going to do?"

"I shall not hunt to-day; I am going over to Monkscleugh."

"Hum! to buy toys for the child?"

"Yes," said Wilton, laughing. "But for to-day I am safe: Lady Fergusson and her fair daughters, attended by our diplomatic cousin, are going to Brantwood, where there is a coming-of-age ball, or some such high jinks. They politely invited me to be of the party; but I resisted, Moncrief—I resisted!"

"Did you, by George! That puzzles me."

"By St. George, you mean. Why, you suspicious old boy, you do not seem satisfied; and yet Helen Saville will be away three or four days."

"I'll be hanged if I can make you out!" said the Major, and walked away.

Wilton threw himself into an arm-chair and laughed aloud; then he turned very grave, and thought long and deeply. If Moncrief only knew where the real danger lay, and what it was. How was it that he had permitted this mere whim, half curiosity half compassion, to grow into such troublesome proportions? He knew it was folly, and yet he could not resist! He had always felt interested and attracted by that strange girl, whose mingled coldness and sweetness charmed and wounded him; but now, since he had seen her oftener, and listened to her voice, and heard the sudden, but rare, outbreaks of enthusiasm and feeling which would force themselves into expression, as if, in spite of her will, he was conscious that his feelings were deepening into intense passion and tenderness.

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To catch a sympathetic look, a special smile, a little word to himself alone—such were the nothings watched for, sought, treasured, remembered by our patrician soldier. The vision of that poor suffering boy leaning his head against Ella and clasped in her arms, seemed indelibly stamped upon his brain. It was constantly before him, though he fought gallantly against it.

It seemed to have brought about a crisis of feeling. Before that, though touched, interested, curious, he was not absorbed; now, reason as he would, resist as he would, he could not banish the desperate longing to be in that boy's place just for once. In short, Wilton was possessed by one of those rare, but real, passions which, when they seize upon a man of his age, are infinitely more powerful, more dangerous, or, as the case may be, more noble than when they partake of the eager effervescence of youth.

And what was to be the end thereof?—so he asked himself as, starting from his seat, he paced the room.

Ardently as he felt, he could not but acknowledge that to marry a girl, not only in a position little more than menial, but of whose antecedents he knew absolutely nothing—who, for some mysterious reason, did not seem to have a friend on earth—was a piece of folly he ought to be ashamed to commit. And yet to give her up—worse still, to leave her for some demure curate, some enterprising bagman to win, perhaps to trample upon. Impossible!

What then? It must not be asserted that the possibility of some tie less galling and oppressive than matrimony never presented itself to Ralph Wilton's mind. He had known such conditions among his friends, and some (according to his lax, but not altogether unpopular, opinions) had not turned out so badly for any of the parties concerned; but in this case he rejected the idea as simply out of the question. He would no more dare breathe it to that obscure little girl than to a princess. It would be hard enough to win or rouse her to admit him as a lover, even on the most honourable terms. She seemed not to think such things existed for her. There was in her such a curious mixture of frankness and indifference, coldness and sweetness, all flecked with sparks of occasional fire, that Wilton could not help believing she had some uncommon history; and there were times when he felt that, if he but asked her, she would tell him everything he craved to know. Never had he met a woman (for, young as she was, she was eminently womanly) so utterly without coquetry. Her perfect freedom from this feminine ingredient was almost insulting, and a certain instinct warned him from attempting to break through the invisible barrier which her unconscious simplicity created. Yet all this restraint was becoming intolerable. At Brosedale he never saw her alone; out of it, he never saw her at all.

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The desire to know all about her, to impress her, to win her, and the struggling instinct of caste, the dread of making some false step that would ruin him in her estimation, tormented him almost into a fever.

His long meditation ended in his ringing sharply, and ordering round the dog-cart to drive into Monkscleugh.

"It's sure to snow, sir," said his servant.

"Not yet, I think. At any rate, I shall take my chance."

"Yes," he continued, half aloud, as the man disappeared, "I must make the attempt; and if I meet her—why, what will be, will be!" With this profoundly philosophic conclusion he proceeded to draw on an overcoat and prepare for his cold drive.

The previous day, Wilton had managed, by a profound stratagem, to procure an interview with Donald, and for his pains found that young gentleman fearfully cross and rude, moreover alone; but in the course of their short conversation, the heir of Brosedale confessed to being greatly enraged at the nonappearance of some fresh drawing materials which had been forwarded from London, and of which no tidings could be heard; that "Dandy," his special pony, was ill or disabled, and no one was at liberty to go for them; so Ella had promised to walk over to Monkscleugh the next morning.

Of course Wilton discovered that he, too, had "urgent private affairs" of his own to transact in the town, and, had it "rained elephants and rhinoceroses," he would have persevered.

It was a still, cold morning. The bitter wind of the day before had fallen, and a kind of expectant hush pervaded the air. The man, who stood at the horse's head, looked round him with a very dissatisfied air, not seeing the necessity for driving to Monkscleugh.

However, the drive there was accomplished without any encounter, save with a barefooted lassie on her way to market. At first Wilton drove slowly, and then fast, and before they had reached the town the snow had begun, in large slow flakes. In spite of its increasing density, he managed to call at the saddler's and the corn-factor's, and twice at the railway station, but all in vain; so, with a muttered malediction on the weather, which had, no doubt, defeated the object of his expedition, he turned his horse's head towards home.

"It's going to be a bad fall," he said to his servant, as they proceeded through the thickly-descending snow, which scarce permitted them to see a yard right or left.

"It is so, sir; and I wish we were home, or, anyhow, across the brae there, where the road turns to Brosedale."

"Do you think we will lose the track?"

"I'll be surprised if we do not, sir."

"I fancy I shall be able to make it out," returned Wilton, and

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drove on as rapidly as he could in silence. Suddenly he pulled up. "Look," said he, "there—to the right. Do you not see something like a figure—a woman?"

"Faith, it's only a big stone, sir!"

"No—it moves! Hallo!" shouted Wilton. "I think you are off the road."

The figure stopped, turned, and came towards them. Wilton immediately sprang down and darted forward, exclaiming, "Miss Rivers! Good God! what weather for you! How fortunate I overtook you. Come, let me assist you to reach my dog-cart. You must be nearly wet through."

She put her hand on his offered arm. "It is indeed fortunate you came up. I had begun to feel bewildered." Nevertheless she spoke quite calmly, and accepted his aid to mount the dog-cart with perfect composure. As Wilton took his place beside her and gathered up the reins, after wrapping his plaid round her, he made up his mind very rapidly not to attempt the longer and more open route to Brosedale.

He drove more slowly, taking good heed of the objects he could make out, and, to his great joy, recognised a certain stunted, gnarled oak, to the right of which lay Glenraven, and having passed it, somewhat increased his speed.

"It is scarcely wise to push on to Brosedale until this heavy fall is over. Beside, the Lodge is much nearer, and you ought not to be a moment longer than you can help in these wet clothes. I am afraid you must depend on the resources of our cook for dry garments."

"My clothes are not so very wet, but my boots are. I wish we could have gone on to Brosedale; but if it cannot be, I will not trouble you. This snow is too heavy to last very long."

"Pray heaven it may!" said Wilton inwardly. Here was the first gleam of good fortune that had visited him. Ella was to be all alone with him for two or three hours. Snow or no snow, he would manage that, at all events. All the Brosedale women away, Moncrief certain to be storm-stayed somewhere—what a glorious chance for a long confidential talk, for the solving of many doubts, for the forging of some link that would bind this wild, free bird to him. The excessive delight and exaltation that made his heart bound roused him to the necessity of self-control, and he swore to himself that not a word or a look should escape him to offend or startle his prize.

"How was it you ventured out on so unpromising a morning?" he asked, as they proceeded, stopping from time to time to make sure of the road.

"Oh, Donald was so ravenous to get a parcel which he thought must be mislaid at Monkscleugh, that I promised to go over for it; and you know I love so much to be out. Still I do not think I should have attempted it, only a Mr. Wilton, who was going somewhere in

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the phaeton, offered to drive me to Monkscleugh. I thought it would snow, but I hoped to get back before it began. However, I was overtaken; and I fancy I should have wandered all day had you not found me."

"I thought Wilton was going with Lady Fergusson to the fête at Brantwood?"

"He was; but he was to take up some one on the way."

"He is a relation of mine," said Wilton, feeling marvellously crossed by the simple fact of St. George having discovered the hidden treasure as well as himself.

"I suppose so; but he is quite unlike you."

It would be hard to say, logically, why this comforted Colonel Wilton, but it did.

"Hold hard, sir!" cried the groom, who was standing up and peering ahead. "You will be right against the gate." And Wilton found he was at home. Another moment and he pulled up at the door of the Lodge.

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TEMPLE BAR.

MARCH 1875.

Leah: a Woman of Fashion.

By MRS. EDWARDES,
Author of 'Ought We to Visit Her?' 'Archie Lovell,' &c.

Chapter XIV.

BALM IN GILEAD.

Perfect love casteth out fear. Leah Pascal's "fancy," a caprice born of idleness, nurtured by vanity, shivers under the first breath of adversity it is called upon to meet. A woman of larger intelligence would have given Danton the chance, at least, of explanation; in the face of harshest evidence, have believed him free until his own lips confirmed the story of his marriage. A woman of larger soul had said, "Married, or not married, I love him, and must love him still; *that* can no weakness, no unworthiness of his undo!" But you will generally find that human beings are pitiless in nice proportion to their breadth of moral vision. Her own pride brought low, her own vanity sharply stabbed, resentment against the man who has caused her to suffer—these, not love's all-embracing, all-extenuating anguish, are the first emotions roused in Leah Pascal's breast. With a face of marble, but collected of demeanour as though the whole scene were some amusing drawing-room charade, she listens to Danton's calumniators for yet another ten minutes. Then, with just her usual voice and manner, wishes "good night" all round, salutes the tip of Prince Charming's whisker, bestows a coquettish parting glance upon Lord Stair, and makes her way lightly up to her room—shared with her by little Deb in Naomi's absence.

The child sleeps profoundly; crushed, humiliated, burning with angry passion though she be, Leah is faithful to the one unselfish instinct of her nature; walks straight to her sister's pillow, stoops, and kisses her. Debbie sleeps profoundly, the smile of innocence

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on her lips; the smell of the gloire de Dijon roses on the toilet-table makes the room sweet. That smile, that sweetness, fall like madness on Leah's over-wrought brain, for both speak to her of Danton! Double-locking her door, she flings herself, dressed as she is, upon her bed, and through all the early hours of the night keeps her watch—that ghastly first watch over a new-slain hope—alone.

Withhold your pity because her love is not of the finest? Oh, reader, pity her the more. Nobler sorrows bring their own consolation. The sufferings of inferior, narrower natures, should appeal to one like the blind physical pain of an animal—a pain over which no modifying influence of soul or will has power.

The other inmates of the house go to their rooms; Leah hears them not. Danton, after a while, returns, pausing, lover-like, outside her door as he passes. She hears him not. She is in the state of nerves when our bodily perceptions become blunted, when all outward objects of sense are but as shadows beside the torturing grief within. At last the short night of Paris ouvrier life is spent; the rumbling wheels of the market carts, the cries of the country people, begin to be heard in the streets below, and with a shiver Leah starts abruptly from the bed. She is cold—ice-cold, and sick. Bodily discomfort arouses her from her trance of bitter passion; she undresses, gets into bed beside warm, little, softly-breathing Debbie, and falls into the deep sleep of exhaustion; dreams fair dreams even, poor child, of moonlight walks with Danton, in which diamonds glitter on her wrists and bosom (Jack Chamberlayne's diamonds), and the gloire de Dijon roses are in her hand. Happy for Leah Pascal if she die ere the spirit of that dream be realised!

It is late in the morning before she stirs; and when at last her heavy eyes unclose, for a few mocking seconds her dreams are with her still—"not imagined, felt." Then comes the dreadful flash of full returning consciousness, and then—the necessity, familiar to most of us, of living and making no sign that the heart within one's breast is dead. Joys may be exceptional; grief never is unique. No commonplace day that dawns but is the conflux to a million human beings of two eternities of pain. Throughout this city of Paris, do you suppose hundreds of women are not going through just such an awakening as Leah Pascal's? Each thinking her own fate the hardest, each crying out in her soul against the Juggernaut society, the letter of whose laws, while she tramples the spirit under foot, she is too weak or too cowardly to set at naught.

The necessity of living! Leah rises, dresses with as much fond care as usual, and comes down pale, but "in spirits," to her mid-day breakfast, and to the accustomed flirtation that seasons it. Lord Stair is more her slave than ever throughout the meal; by a thousand

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delicate and unobtrusive attentions shows his care for her, insists upon her drinking champagne instead of the vin compris of the table, makes her laugh even—she finds it easier to laugh than smile—over the latest bit of Paris gossip. And Leah feels grateful to him. All men are worthless; at that generalisation she arrived long ago; the thought of love is noxious to her as is that of food to a fevered palate. Still, for such services as vanity demands, as well utilise Lord Stair's devotion as another's.

When Jack comes round in his smart mail phaeton at two o'clock, he finds his beloved ready dressed—the first time since their engagement such punctuality has rewarded him—and looking handsomer than her wont.

"I never saw you wear a veil before, Leah," says Mr. Chamberlayne, staring at his beloved with amative lack-lustre gaze; "and it becomes you wonderfully, by Jove! Why, you have quite a colour! I've always told you what you wanted was colour."

So—a veil and a little rouge can patch up the ravages of such a night of passion as the last!

Leah takes her place beside her lover, drives along with him to the Bois—aye, past that Allée in the Champs Elysées where she walked with Danton fifteen hours before—and feels that as long as she can command fine-stepping horses, and irreproachable dress, and see the eyes of men and women follow her as she passes, there may be balm in Gilead yet. When she returns to the Rue Castiglione, a couple of hours later, a glow that is not wholly due to art is on her cheeks. Her hand lingers in Jack's at parting. She confesses, by not denying, that she looks forward to a winter spent under Italian skies, with feelings of happiness that almost equal his. Jack drives away intoxicated—for one time at least in his life—not by absinthe.

Half way up the stairs appear Deb and Naomi, flying at headlong speed down to meet their sister.

"Cousin Bell has come, Leah! Cousin Bell has come! All the house smells like M. Rimmel's shop, and she has thirteen packages, and wants to have tea before dinner, and her hair is puffed up on her head like the ladies at the play." So shrieks Debbie.

"Cousin Bell has brought me the loveliest chatelaine," cries Naomi—a flutter of genuine agitation in her voice—"and she says I ought to wear my dresses real grown-up length now. And I am to go and stay with her in London, and be introduced. And, oh, Leah"—this in a whisper—"isn't Cousin Bell's face made up? Why, the powder *stands* on her nose!"

Leah, at the news, lifts her veil, and hastily rubs her handkerchief over her cheeks (does Leah love Cousin Bell so well as to weep over her arrival? thinks Deb), then puts a smile on her lips—we have seen before that she is clever at this essentially feminine accomplish-

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ment—and runs up, preceeded by the two wildly-excited children, to the drawing-room.

"Bell! A day earlier than we expected! Such a delightful surprise—how thoughtful, how good of you!"

"My dearest girl!"—they embrace—"I was *so* anxious to be here at the last to help you"—they embrace again—"and I knew I should look a wreck for the wedding, unless I had two clear days after the horrid sea-sickness. You own sweet pet!"

They embrace for the third time; then fall to scrutinising each other's faces, as pretty women do, who are at once closest friends and direst rivals.

"The poor thing has not thriven on her engagement," remarks Bell. "Engaged people never do thrive. I lost seven pounds and a half before I married Mr. Baltimore. The incessant trouble of the dressmakers, I suppose."

"Or the misplaced anxiety of one's friends," answers Leah. "But tell me about yourself, Bell, dear. You are not looking a quarter as well as you did in Scarborough. What will you have—tea? In this barbarous house they never give us five o'clock tea; but I will order some for you at once."

Then, each having relieved her anxiety as to the other's health, the two dear friends settle down on a sofa beside the fire and grow confidential—so confidential that Deb and Naomi, listening with the avid attention of unfledged girls, find it difficult at all times to decipher the meaning of their talk. The better, perhaps, for such rudimentary morals as Naomi and little Deb may possess.

"Laura Griffiths is looking saffron-coloured." Mrs. Baltimore has been spending the past month in Brighton; her stories of well-known London people are consequently as full-bodied as though it were June, not October. "Saffron, indeed, is hardly the word—that dead, thick gamboge, rather, that dark women do turn when they go wrong in their affections. And Sir George passes her without bowing. This I can vouch for. He was riding with me on the cliff, the other day, when we met her. The old dowager has taken lately to prune de Monsieur liveries, and you should have seen how Sir George enjoyed it when I commented, as a matter of taste, on the mixture of purple and yellow! Always the fate of what are called superior women," adds Bell, malignantly. "Poor Laura ought to have lived in the age of Sir Charles Grandison. No man, nowadays, will dance a sentimental minuet for longer than a fortnight at a time."

"Especially if the sentimental minuet necessitates a gamboge complexion! Have you been seeing as much as ever of little Arty Cresswell?"

"Arty Cresswell—why, have I not told you about the great Burton catastrophe? You know at what pace things were proceeding at

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Scarborough! Well, Arty, it seems, confided in some one else (that mysterious some one else, who never actually comes to the light), or left his keys about, or—tiring of the whole affair—sent the letters himself. Every version has had its day and supporters. At all events, the letters—*her* letters, you understand—arrived one fine morning, labelled and dated, and directed in a neat packet to Mr. Burton."

"Who knew everything, as well as the rest of the world, from the first," suggests Leah, with airy cynicism, worthy of Cousin Bell herself.

"Yes; and who, knowing everything, was naturally furious at having his eyes forced open against his will! You can imagine the set of tableaux that followed. Repentant wife on her knees, hair dishevelled, Spartan husband. Her mother sent for. His mother sent for. Children sent for. Clergy. Lawyers. Curtain."

"And now?"

"Arty Cresswell has gone, for his health, to the Pacific. The children have gone, for their education, to Germany. Mrs. Burton is living on five-and-twenty shillings a-week at Dieppe, and poor, injured, innocent Mr. Burton is deer-stalking in the Highlands."

"All these things end so samely," says Leah. "A pity some one does not strike out something new in the way of domestic catastrophes. It must have been much better fun in the good old days of hair triggers and twelve paces.

"When men fought with each other, women, at least, had a better chance," says Bell, savagely. "Depend upon it, gentlemen like Mr. Burton would contrive to keep their eyes wider open if they knew that their blindness might have to be paid for by an ounce or so of cold lead eventually!"

Mrs. Baltimore lives on men's praise, in men's society; has men friends by the hundred; has embittered men's homes, if she has not broken their hearts, by the score—and hates them! Not, perhaps, as she hates her own sex—*that* feeling is instinctive, warm, human; but rather with the wary, cold hatred of political antagonists. A type of woman belonging to an altogether advanced stage of civilisation, but growing every day we live more common.

"Mrs. Burton is not blameless, of course; indeed with a child of Arty's age, the whole thing must have been her doing from the first. Yet, of the two—the husband and wife I mean—she is infinitely the least contemptible. That is my opinion. The world, with its usual fine bow-wow justice (the world with grown-up daughters especially), cuts Mrs. Burton in the street, and invites Mr. Burton to stay in the Highlands."

"Grown-up daughters remind one of Maggie McDormond," says Leah, languidly interested in the Burton tragedy—"Maggie Atkinson, by this time, I suppose."

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"Maggie McDormond? Is it possible there can be another big scandal I have not written about? Maggie McDormond, my dear, has . . . . gone to the mischief."

Naomi and Deb both edge further forward on their chairs.

"When you left England, she was on the eve, as you know, of a most ridiculously good marriage."

"I remember. One of the Patent Mustard people, was it not? Eight thousand a year, and all the little McDormond's to be taken into the business."

"Well, at the very last, as near her wedding-day as you are, she decamped with the footman."

Even Leah opens her eyes at this. The two children give a little cry of delight.

"The footman . . . . stay; the German-master . . . . something utterly disgraceful, I know. Ah, I recollect! It *was* the German music-master; a sentimental young person, with white hair falling on his shoulders, who talked about High Art and Elective Affinities. Little as I like the McDormonds generally," adds Bell, "I must say I felt for the people in their disgrace. Nothing is so impossible to live down as the misconduct of an unmarried daughter."

Leah's cheeks flush to a livelier red than they borrowed from artifice an hour ago. But the light is waning; the curtains across Madame's windows are close drawn; and Cousin Bell, absorbed in her own stories, sees nothing.

"Poor old McDormond ran after his daughter, they say, and just caught her in time to be too late. She had been married the day before. So much for demure little girls who get up at six in the morning to study Mozart, and who decline fast dances on principle."

"She will have her reward, Bell." How coldly, articulately Leah speaks! Who could guess what vain remorse, what passionate memories grasp her heart at this moment? "A woman who makes a love-match needs no worse fate than to be forced to live out a love-match. How is Brighton—as pleasant and as wicked as Scarborough was?"

"Wicked enough in all conscience; I cannot say much about its being pleasant. Every place bores one equally after a week. We have had Tatters and suite to amuse us, for one thing."

Leah's face betrays livelier emotion than even the misfortunes of her dearest friends have had power to elicit from her.

"Tatters! And does she drive the same ponies still?—the Cholmondoley ponies, I mean. And how does she dress? And has she taken yet to furs? I would sooner rely on Tatters for real taste than on all these Parisian men-milliners together."

"Tatters, my dear, came out the day before I left Brighton in the very most exquisite costume I ever saw. Ruby velvet, with ermine—

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so deep—for trimming, and amethyst buttons, that they say belonged to Marie Antoinette. They were purchased for a fabulous price at the Empress Eugénie's sale—authentic historical buttons, not wretched imitations," adds Bell, mournfully, "such as we outsiders are forced to be content with."

Leah's heightened colour, her eyes, her lips, all evince the warmest interest in the subject. "And what was her hat? But I need scarcely ask—*en suite*, of course."

"Her hat," answers Mrs. Baltimore, "was a Louis Seize hunting hat, of ruby velvet, with a clasp, absolutely princely in value, to match the buttons."

"And purchased also at the Empress Eugénie's sale?"

"No; the clasp was made expressly for her at Hunt and Roskell's; I know the history of every stone; the handle of her driving-whip richly set with amethysts and diamonds to match."

"Such a dress is impossible," says Leah, with a sigh. "One might get as far as the buttons, perhaps."

. . . "And without them the dress is simply a ruby velvet and ermine, such as Mesdames Brown, Jones, and Robinson can order at their milliner's. Impossible to imitate Tatters, without Tatter's resources."

"And who is she, Leah?" cries Naomi, perfectly unable to restrain her feelings longer. "The very happiest person on earth, I am sure."

"You should never ask questions when your betters are speaking, Naomi. I have told you so often. However, on this occasion, perhaps, your curiosity is laudable. Tatters is—Bell, would you kindly enlighten the children's heathen ignorance?"

"Tatters is one of the best drest women in London," says Bell, gravely, "as she is certainly one of the most envied. Tatters drives the finest horses that money can buy, she sets the fashion in dress, and, it has even been hinted, in manners. Whene'er she takes her walks abroad half the heads in London turn to look at her."

"As they will after Leah," interrupts Debbie's shrill treble. "When Leah marries she is going to be a fine lady of fashion, like you, Cousin Bell, and Madame Tatters."

Happily the appearance of Désiré, with five o'clock tea, puts an end to the conversation.

Chapter XV.

AN ENCHANTRESS À LA MODE.

Bell Baltimore is fair, free, and five-and-thirty; tall of stature, upright as a dart, and as nearly graceful as a woman can be who owes full one half of her graces to training, rather than nature. Not fair

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by temperament—the dark brow and eyelash tell you that—but blonde by long bleaching of the hair, long powdering of the skin—fair, as we of the nineteenth century have grown to accept the word in common parlance. A wonderfully pretty woman, even though her youth (and such a youth!) be over; lips sweet as the petals of a wild rose; a little nose, half-inclined to impertinence, and the handsomest pair of mocking, cold, blue eyes that ever smiled away the reason and the fortunes of men.

Poor Bell—what a throat and arms she once had! Well, when she had them, she displayed them liberally, and now that she has them no longer, she displays them not at all. Chest delicate, say the faculty. Whatever the sacrifice, the lungs must *not* be exposed to night air. Some weaker sisters thus circumstanced might give up health to fashion. Bell does nothing of the kind; accepts her doom like a martyr, and in a ball-room, with clouds of diaphonous gauze rising to her chin, and softening every angle of shoulder and elbow, looks as girlish of figure still as many a budding beauty of nineteen. Never was woman a greater adept at knowing how much it is good to show than Bell Baltimore. I speak not of elbows only. She carries the supreme art of artless reticence into friendship, flirtation, love—into every relation of human existence.

Married in her teens to a man a score of years her senior, Bell, by the time she was seven-and-twenty, was left alone to steer her little bark among the shoals and quicksands of fast London life. Mr. Baltimore got attached to the embassy in St. Petersburg, and Bell's lungs—so the same accommodating faculty declared—were too delicate for her to accompany him. Scandal? Not a bit of it. They lived together as long as fate permitted them, like angels; was it not through the interest of one of Bell's devoted friends that dear Robert got his appointment? Mrs. Baltimore, then as now, was immensely admired, run after; and Mr. Baltimore—well, let us say that Mr. Baltimore had the good taste and feeling to enjoy his wife's popularity. Who can forget Bell's beautiful conduct after his departure? How she refused two consecutive balls, gave up Ascot and the Derby, and could only be induced to go to Goodwood with the quietest little party of four, and in half-mourning!

A young woman of seven-and-twenty cannot pine away and die because her husband lives in Russia. Bell, of course, rallied. Every letter from St. Petersburg exhorted her to amuse herself, and she was far too good a wife to neglect the wishes of her absent lord. She rallied; went out next season more than ever; perhaps into a society one shade faster than she had frequented with Robert, and from that time till the present has—the word looks malicious, and yet I can find no other to replace it—has floated! With occasional submergencies, I must confess. Are there not submergencies in every career,

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political, literary, artistic? The career of a votary of fashion is no exception to the rule.

Well, when women in the lower grades of life, wretched seamstresses or mill-girls, once get their heads under water, they very seldom trouble society by coming to the surface more. Bell, wise in her generation, has consistently made to herself friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, and in high places—friends who, after considerable patience, with a good deal of hard pulling, have each time succeeded in bringing her to dry land. "Mrs. Baltimore was cut at one time by two-thirds of London," shrieks shrill-toned malice. "Cut, or not cut, I have always gone to court regularly," says Bell's calm voice; "not because the ceremonial amuses me, but because, in Robert's position, during Robert's absence, I feel that it is the right thing for me to do."

How can Mrs. Brown and Lady Smith refuse the acquaintance of a lady who, as a duty, jostles elbows with every duchess and marchioness in the land at the Palace drawing-rooms?

A good many people do refuse it: old friends of her husband, well-wishers of her children—Bell has actually a pair of small daughters away under the stern wing of Mr. Baltimore's sisters in Scotland. The world generally accepts her, under protest! "Not a person I would allow my Lucretia to be seen with in any public place, and we never have her at our small parties. But at a crush—my dear Mrs. Candour, you know as well as I do how impossible it is to weed when you really want your rooms filled." And Bell understands her position to a nicety; gives back hatred for hatred, scorn for scorn, with interest; rewards Lucretia and Lucretia's mamma for each crush to which she is invited, on sufferance, by stabs such as only a woman living in the debatable land between the half world and the whole has power to inflict.

She is a cousin by marriage of the Pascals, and the Prince Charming, with his wonted Christian optimism concerning success, has always persisted in regarding her as the most innocent of human beings. Once or twice during the periods of submergence of which I spoke, it has indeed been in his power to throw out a stray rope or so on her behalf. And Bell, odd to say, has returned these acts by a certain substantial gratitude—opera tickets for which she had no better use; boxes of faded finery for the girls; during the last twelve months, trips to watering-places for Leah; and, finally, the capture of Jack Chamberlayne.

That Leah, with her beauty, her affection for money, and her perfectly "broad" notions as to ways and means, might have arrived at the same end, unassisted, is possible—possible, but not likely. Jack, eight short weeks ago, never, on principle, opened his lips to a lady, or in any way frequented the hunting-grounds of decent society.

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Mothers looked at him in apathetic despair. Daughters called him "that hideous little monster," and drew their skirts together as he passed. All classes of respectable money-hunters regarded the prospective hundred thousand pounds as already in the hands of the Philistines. But Bell, from that debatable standing-point of hers, thought differently, resolved upon and encompassed Jack's rehabilitation by a coup de main, the ostensible machinery—horse-dealing.

Mr. Chamberlayne, at Scarborough for his health, had a thoroughbred Irish mare to sell. Mrs. Baltimore, at Scarborough for *her* health, was suddenly ordered horse-exercise—by the faculty. They met; they looked over the mare's points, in each other's company. "When I have to deal with a gentleman," said Bell, giving Jack the fullest benefit of her blue eyes—"when I have to deal with a gentleman, I never employ either vet or dealer. You say the mare is sound, Mr. Chamberlayne. Tell me your price in two words, and the affair is settled."

And so it was—for poor Jack. From horse-dealing to tender friendship; from tender friendship for Mrs. Baltimore to tender friendship for her dearest friend, Miss Pascal; the gradations were easy. Not unversed in some other social dangers, Jack had literally no experience whatever to guide him amidst glaciers matrimonial. Jolly little dinners and suppers; boating parties; rides; every human duty, tie, or belief made a theme for ridicule. . . . . What was there in all this to scare a man's conscience?—what to remind him that he had overstepped the sunny frontiers of Bohemia and was in a country where the word "to-morrow" has a meaning? Jolly little dinners; unlimited champagne, of the best vintage; a scoff at love and lovers, at husbands and wives—and then an awakening, one fine morning, with a worse headache than his wont, and a remembrance that his signet ring reposed, in token of affiance, upon Miss Pascal's third finger! So was Jack Chamberlayne rehabilitated.

"We owe everything to you, Bell," says Colonel Pascal, pressing his cousin's hand as he leads her down Madame Bonchrétien's gas-illumined, tawdrily-decorated staircase. "My dear child's early marriage to the man of her choice, a young fellow so estimable—estimable in every way—as Mr. Chamberlayne."

"And, if Mr. Chamberlayne will only live another twelvemonth, the possessor of a hundred thousand pounds," interrupts Bell, wickedly. I will do Bell Baltimore justice. She may be—she is—a finished actress, in her own especial line. Hypocrisy, without aim or audience, is an exertion beyond her strength. "Jack is not estimable, and he is not the man of Leah's choice; but he is a very good parti, and I managed it. You are right, there. Well, you have done me more than one good turn in days gone by, and I am not fond of being in debt. Just that."

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Bell sits, of course, beside Colonel Pascal, at the head of the table, and the dinner passes off brilliantly. Instantly upon the arrival of the fine London lady, with her airs, graces, band-boxes, and impertinence, Madame Bonchrétien sent to the nearest restaurateur for entrées. Désiré is in his newest buttons; the old ladies have put on their best caps, Deb and Naomi their rose-coloured sashes. Even Mrs. Wynch, much as she detests Colonel Pascal and all belonging to him, is in her snuffy ermine and cotton velvet. Bell herself is simply dazzling. Her dress, an azure silk, a little the worse for a couple of seasons' wear, with soft lace ruffles at her wrists and throat, and a heartbreaking little entanglement of blonde and rose-buds perched coquettishly on the summit of her bleached locks. Beautiful, with Leah's blooming youth, with Naomi's chiselled features, so near, you could scarely call her. But there is a fascination independent of, and beyond, girlish freshness, or perfection of outline. Bell Baltimore had studied the whole art of allurement from beginning to end, and practises it with the calm, untroubled certainty of an adept. She gives a side glance and looks down at Colonel Pascal. She openly commences a flirtation with her opposite neighbour, Lord Stair. Toothless old Mr. Macnamurdo, Churchwarden Pettingall, do not get through their dinners without an occasional look or word that makes their withered hearts feel young again.

"And this is what Leah Pascal, in time, may hope to arrive at." So rings the death-knell of love, purity, of all fairest might-have-beens, in Leah's soul. Smiles prodigal as those of *Tatters*, and but a shade less venial. A face patched over to perfection; with morality to match. Insincerity so perfect that one bows before it as a work of art, and a heart of steel. The last-finished product of decades of civilisation, a woman of fashion.

"You have become as silent as a school-girl, my dear," whispers Bell, affectionately encircling Leah's waist when the ladies have returned to the drawing-room. "The depressing effect of living among all these mummies, probably. Oh, my poor child, what men! Is Lord Stair—I mean to appropriate Lord Stair—the nearest thing to humanity the house contains?"

"Lord Stair is my very greatest friend, Bell," answers Leah, evasively. Not for thrice Jack Chamberlayne's prospective wealth could she pronounce the name of Danton before Bell Baltimore. "Don't talk of appropriating Lord Stair, unless you want our friendship to be over."

"It would not be the first time that the same person has had his heart broken by us both," remarks Mrs. Baltimore. Look at Mr. Chamberlayne."

"That is quite another matter," says Mr. Chamberlayne's beloved. "If Jack were to admire twenty other people as much as he does me I don't think I could be jealous of him. Poor, good old Jack!"

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Poor, good old Jack drops in, unexpectedly, before tea is over. During the whole past week Leah has persistently enlarged upon the necessity of his keeping aloof from the Rue Castiglione during the final forty-eight hours before the wedding. It is an established piece of etiquette that the bridegroom should thus absent himself. . . . Every old lady in the house has told her so. . . . And the little sisters insist on having her to themselves at the last, and she is really not free from those horrible dressmakers one moment during the day. The logical result of which persistence being that Jack has again turned wildly suspicious of Lord Stair; jealous, beyond cure of judgment, of every moment that Leah and Lord Stair spend together unguarded by his presence.

Much as he loves the girl—oh, poverty of language, that we must so often desecrate that word!—he distrusts her more; thereby, fool though he be, showing sagacity that might shame the reason of some better men. Her unwonted kindness during their drive to-day sent him away from the house, as I have said, intoxicated; before he had turned into the Rue de Rivoli he began to ask himself ugly questions on the score of her possible motives. Mistrust does not require any very high or complicated mental process; and, little though Jack has seen of refined society, his experiences since he left off jackets have sufficed to teach him the meaning of Judas kisses. Once aroused, and neither cigars nor brandy could quiet the "monster begot upon itself, born on itself." Dressmakers, little sisters, etiquette—a nice pretext to put a man off with, etiquette! Jack broods fiercely over his imagined wrongs during his solitary dinner, rushes forth from his hotel the very second the meal is over, and enters Madame Bonchrétien's salon just in time to find Lord Stair murmuring pretty things into Miss Pascal's ear, on the sofa, and Bell Baltimore in a corner, virtuously playing besique with little Deb.

"You aim too high, Debbie." Bell sees Jack Chamberlayne, without uplifting her eyelashes, and improvises this small aside for his benefit. "That is just the fault Leah makes, too. You children risk everything for double besique or sequence, and I—you see, Deb, score my little common marriage, twenty, and win. Oh! Mr. Chamberlayne, is it really you? How you startled me!"

Jack never feels himself more thoroughly at home than in Mrs. Baltimore's company—a doubtful compliment, perhaps, to Mrs. Baltimore! She can talk down to his level, while she makes him feel that he talks up to hers. She knows his world, masculine and feminine—she knows himself; save, perhaps, in some few honest corners beyond a Bell Baltimore's lights. Even with Leah frowning on him, it would be hard for Jack to remain long sullen under the influence of this syren's smiles. And Leah does not intend to frown on any man to-night, least of all on Jack. The presence of her own familiar friend fans the girl's latent coquetry—bitterly miserable though she be—to white

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heat. When Danton comes (her feverish eyes watch the clock for him already) he shall find Lord Stair and Jack Chamberlayne, *both* at her feet. Her cheeks flush to their loveliest hectic—her spirits become wild. Not Bell, with all her Brighton gossip, her practised powers of amusing, can compete with Leah to-night. Jack grows more desperately in love than ever. He perches himself on a low stool about the third of a yard from her feet, and, jealousy and suspicion forgotten, looks up, with all the rapture of proprietorship, into her exquisite, animated face —Lord Stair still forming a modest third in the background. Colonel Pascal gazes at the picture of innocent happiness with parental pride; and Bell, neglected, begins to yawn behind her pocket-handkerchief.

"Leah," cries little Deb, at this touching juncture, "may Naomi and I put on our bridesmaids' dresses—just for a quarter of an hour? Naomi does so want to try our effect, and we will promise not to sit down; and you really *ought* to let Jack see how we look."

Leah objects—an unaccountable, sudden sharpness in her voice—but Jack interferes. "Why the dickens, at such a time as this, should the poor children not amuse themselves? Bridesmaids—love their little hearts! Let us see the bridesmaids' dresses, by all means. Anything to remind us of that thrice-blessed six o'clock ceremony next Wednesday."

"I hope we shall call it blessed this time next year," remarks Leah. However, she lets the children depart, Naomi rushing wildly, three steps at a time, Deb's poor little halting legs following as best they may, upstairs. Ten minutes later they return, transfigured from gawky, ill-dressed girls into angels, all white-and-rose and spotless gauze, afraid to walk or breathe or sit, after the manner of angels.

"What we want, to show us off, is the bride!" cries Naomi, in a kind of exaltation. "Stand up for a minute, Leah, just to try how we shall look."

Leah is in simple white muslin to-night; some instinct of feminine friendship guided her, doubtless, in selecting the one dress dear Bell cannot venture to wear. A creamy gloire de Dijon rose, taken from the glass upon her dressing-table, lies amidst the ripples of her nut-brown hair.

"Yes, to be sure, Leah, cries Jack, springing to his feet; "to please me—well, to please the children, then—stand up for a minute. Where is the use of false shame at this time of day?"

"False shame!" repeats Leah, slowly, and gives her lover a look—such a look of frozen indifference as any man but a Jack Chamberlayne must surely interpret right. "Well, I never thought among my many sins that I should be accused of that."

Saying which she rises, Jack taking forcible possession of both her hands, and allows herself to be centrally placed, for the benefit of the company at large, with the angels behind.

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"You want a veil—you want a veil to hide your blushes," cries Mr. Chamberlayne. "Ah, here is just the thing!" And seizing a lace antimacassar from the back of a neighbouring chair, he throws it suddenly over her head. "Now, if we had only a parson handy, we would get through the ceremony at once and save papa the expense of the wedding dinner. By the Lord, we would!"

He draws Leah's cold left hand through his arm, adjusts an imaginary flower in his button-hole, smoothes down his neck-tie, goes through the pantomine of producing a ring from his waistcoat pocket.

"I, John Frederick, take thee, Leah"——

He has proceeded thus far in the marriage ceremony before Leah can free her hand from his grasp. The children are in ecstasies, the old ladies, on tiptoe, watch with delight the frolics of our dear young Crœsus.

"Take thee, Leah, to my wedded wife. To have and to hold"——

And then Jack stops abruptly. A footstep sounds on the stair, the drawing-room door opens; another second, and Danton has walked straight in amidst them all.

Leah's head is turned away, but the sudden quickening of her breath, the feeling of actual physical pain that contracts her heart, tells her the truth.

Chapter XVI.

"Come!"

Mentally Leah Pascal has rehearsed their meeting at least one hundred times during the past twenty-four hours, always tragically. Danton should find her passionately, loudly injured, or cold and tearless as stone; a Lady Macbeth or a Medea. He comes, and she is acting a farce with Jack Chamberlayne, an antimacassar over her head, a room full of indifferent men and women looking on. Is not the yarn of human lives, as a rule, thus mingled—off the stage? Despair, death, in the soul, and externally the travestiments of a burlesque and spectators!

"M. Danton—this *is* fortunate," cries Naomi. She does not love Danton ordinarily; but any man, any audience would be welcome to Naomi Pascal at this blissful crowning point of existence. "Leah is only got up, you know, but Deb and I are real. With white kid gloves, and bouquets, and our bridesmaids' lockets, this is exactly how we shall be on Wednesday."

"How are you, Danton?" cries Jack, holding out a couple of fingers, good-humouredly. "Just in time to play us the Wedding March, eh? We have been following the new fashion in executions, Monsieur; getting *our* execution over, snug and quiet, and disappointing the public."

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Danton is livid; that ashen-grey colour to which dark-complexioned men are apt to turn under the influence of sudden and violent emotion. But the muscles of his mouth, his voice—all that is within the controlling power of will—betray him not.

"You have done wisely, sir." So he remarks, in answer to Jack's small pleasantry. "Wisely and well. On an occasion like Miss Pascal's marriage many men must suffer. By keeping the spectacle private, we may hope at least that their pangs will be lessened."

At the coolness of his tone, the composure with which he enters into Jack's humour, every fibre in Leah's frame thrills with passion. She snatches the covering from her head, flings it from her, and stands, with gaze averted from Jack Chamberlayne and the rest, but confronting *him*. Her eyes seem to have become black as night from the dilation of their pupils, her brow is contracted, her lips are white. An expression of compressed, silent rage, such as I think only features of Hebrew origin can wear, deforms the whole youth and beauty of her face.

"You have the knack of—finding us travestied—M. Danton." God, can this be her own voice, she wonders, that speaks so carelessly! "But practical jokes are our forte. Are they not, Jack?"

And then she turns, and without a blush meets all their looks—her lover's, Lord Stair's, Danton's—all!

"By Jove, I don't know what you mean by practical 'jokes,'" cries Jack, putting on a long face. "You are coming, I hope, Monsieur, to see me turned off on Wednesday? Evening affair — special licence—dinner here, in the Rue Castiglione afterwards. Of course you have offered M. Danton a place at the mournful ceremony, my dear?"

"If I have omitted to do so before, I invite M. Danton now," says Leah, coldly, articulately. "Our friends are to meet at the English chapel in the Avenue Marbeuf, M. Danton, at six precisely."

"There will be four bridesmaids," cries Naomi, with effusion. "Deb and I in white and rose, as you see, and the two Sherringtons in blue"——

"And we have seen the cake," adds Deb. "Oh, such a beauty, M. Danton! As big as a card-table, with the corners off, and Cupid sitting on a heap of gold in the middle."

"There are temptations for you," says Jack, his hollow little face beaming. "If you want another, I have it—be best man. Oh, I am not joking at all, my love." This is in response to a flash he receives from his love's eyes. "I got a telegram from Smithett just before dinner, and he can't come—broken a couple of ribs by a fall down at Newmarket. If M. Danton would not mind standing proxy?"

"Surely, Chamberlayne—ahem—you must have other friends in Paris, friends of older standing—ahem!" Thus Prince Charming,

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pompously, from the hearth-rug; Prince Charming, horrified at having a Bohemian medical student, who plays the piano, who gets his living no respectable person knows how, at his daughter's marriage.

"I accept the invitation conditionally," says Danton, pointedly addressing himself to Leah. "Before next Wednesday it may happen that I am some hundreds of miles away from Paris. If I am here" —a little pause; Leah's heart accentuates that pause with its fullest meaning—"I shall not fail to be at the English chapel, in the Avenue Marbeuf, at six."

"But that sort of answer will scarcely do for a best man, will it?" asks Bell in her silvery tones. She rose while Danton spoke, has crossed the room in her gliding, noiseless way, and stands now close beside Miss Pascal's elbow. "Bridesmaids and best men must, surely, make up their minds, whatever the bride and bridegroom do, before the eleventh hour?"

"Whatever the bride and bridegroom do." As she utters these words with emphasis, Mrs. Baltimore's eyes meet those of Danton, and the gauntlet is thrown down between them. To a very large proportion of men Bell is irresistible. Others, while retaining their peace of mind personally, do fullest justice to her capabilities of conquest. To just a few she is repulsive. Danton is amongst these few, and Bell already knows it. At a glance he discerns the white-wash on her soul, as clearly as the rice-powder on her face; sees the finished woman of the world, the licensed seductress of fashion, in every fold of her clinging draperies, every intonation of her trained voice; and ranks her—oh, how infinitely lower than any of those poor ballet-girls and chorus singers, his public appearance with whom has so scandalised the virtuous-minded inmates of Madame Bonchrétien's house!

"As I am positive to be in Paris," remarks Lord Stair, "and as I never change my mind"—he gives a quick look at Leah—"under any circumstances whatever, perhaps I might be considered an available substitute for Mr. Smithett?"

"Charming! charming!" cries Colonel Pascal, the eye of his imagination already on a paragraph in the *Morning Post*, wherein the delightful name of Lord Stair shall figure pre-eminent. "Really, Chamberlayne, I congratulate myself—your friend must excuse me—but I congratulate myself on Mr.—um—aw—Smithett's broken ribs."

"I don't congratulate myself at all," says Jack, with his frank rudeness, and looking thunder-clouds at Lord Stair. "Smithett is one of my best friends, and a fellow of my own age, and a deuced good-looking fellow, too. Who ever heard of having a best man"——

"Old and ugly enough to be your grandfather," Lord Stair interrupts him with unruffled temper. "It is an anachronism certainly." Still, in a proxy, I think, grey hairs may be overlooked."

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"And your hair is not grey, Lord Stair," cries Deb, fixing her terrible eyes on his lordship's flame-coloured locks. "I heard Leah say the other day that hair like . . . like *that!*" remarks Deb, with delicate ambiguity, "never turned grey. Didn't you, Leah?"

The speech delights Jack back into good-humour.

"I have a great mind to take you with us as travelling bridesmaid, Deb. You would do finely to amuse us on wet days, and that, when we begin to grow tired of each other."

"If you take a bridesmaid, you ought, in common fairness, to take a best man, too," says Lord Stair. "The whole system of wedding-touring wants radical change. Suppose you inaugurate the reformation, Chamberlayne! Make up a pleasant party of five or six people, and never get tired of each other at all. What do you say, Miss Pascal?"

But the question meets with no answer. Miss Pascal has moved abruptly away into the back drawing-room, and stands there, beside the piano; her head turned from every one save M. Danton, who has followed her, her face bent down over a heap of music she is hurriedly examining. Brief must be their colloquy, if colloquy they hold; few the words in which explanation is offered, or passion vented. Mrs. Baltimore watches them stealthily. Colonel Pascal (upon whom an instinct of uneasiness has fallen with regard to Danton) shifts from one dandified foot to the other, passes his jewelled fingers through his hair, fidgets half way across the room—in another minute will be at his daughter's side.

"You have suffered, my poor love; you are suffering at this moment," whispers Danton. "Yes, Miss Pascal, he adds aloud, "the romance you want is here. I brought it down from my room a couple of days ago."

"Suffered! You have killed me," comes her answer in broken, stifling accents. "You have killed me—and you presume to speak like this, still!"

"I love you," is Danton's answer. "Throw me over, be true to me, as you will. I love you."

"Love?—Yes, papa, yes; M. Danton is going to sing for us—You dare insult me with that word. I know *the truth*, sir! Mr. Pettingall has told me the whole shameful truth."

By this time Colonel Pascal has reached them. "It will oblige us infinitely, I am sure, if M. Danton will favour us with some of his very charming songs—the last occasion probably, Leah my love, that you and Mr. Chamberlayne will have the pleasure of hearing them."

"Let me petition, too," cries Bell Baltimore, crossing to the piano. "Music is my passion, M. Danton—Leah, you have not introduced me to M. Danton—Italian songs above all, and I know that you sing Italian well!"

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Danton smiles, looks flattered, and in the space of about a minute and a half has glided into the empty verbiage that in the world is called Art-talk with Bell. He is simply giving Leah time—time for the philtre contained in that word "love" to enter her veins and lend her courage.

"And you *will* sing to us? Ah, how good, and I may choose—these are your songs, M. Danton—I may choose what we shall have, first?"

And Bell does choose, and Danton sings. He possesses a magnificent natural capacity, as we have seen; a voice rich in tone and compass, affluent in youth's full freshness. So far the task is easy. But be sure, without a tolerably strong will, a man cannot be put through a whole repertory of songs, now bravoura, now ballad, now Italian, now English—a man, I say, his heart torn by sudden anguish of disappointment, cannot sing any number of songs, at command, without the exercise of will quite beyond the average. Happily, Danton possesses this will. He shrinks not from a single note—not even from that upper C his enemies know. Ballad and bravoura, French, Italian, English, he goes through it all like an artist, and brings what Bell herself would call her heart into her throat.

"You really must give me the name of that Italian barcarole, M. Danton?" He has quitted the piano at last, and Bell's blue eyes are looking their softest into his. "I have no voice, unfortunately for myself, but I can just make noise enough when I am alone, with the doors well shut, to recall better things. '*Sulla poppa del mio*'—No, my wretched memory will never retain six consecutive Italian words unless you write them down for me."

Reader, all things come to him who waits and has power to utilise his chances. During the past quarter of an hour, aye, during every bar he sung, Danton has been revolving one question in his mind—how to communicate with Leah. To speak to her, even in a whisper, is impossible, guarded, trebly guarded, as she is. To send her a note through one of the servants of the house might be to compromise them both beyond redemption. And he must communicate with her at once, must see her alone to-night, or no more until he meet her as the wife of Jack Chamberlayne.

The opportunity of which he well-nigh despaired comes to him now through the agency of Bell Baltimore; Bell, who would give her two best diamond rings—the occasion forces me into strong language—sooner than see Leah faithless to her affianced lover. Moving into such a position that he can rest his hand upon the mantelshelf, and at the same time feel sure that no friendly eyes overlook his shoulder, Danton takes a note-book from his pocket, tears out a couple of its leaves, and at Mrs. Baltimore's command begins to write—but not the name of the Italian barcarole.

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She crosses over quickly to his side—is Bell set upon poor Danton's conquest, or what, that she should monopolise him so pertinaciously? "I am really ashamed to give you all this trouble, M. Danton, but that is the price people of talent have to pay. You have written me the title of the song? Now would you add the composer's name, and the publisher's? Thank you *so* much." And Bell stretches out her soft pink palm with a look and a smile that exceedingly few men would have strength of mind to resist.

Danton folds the piece of paper on which he has scribbled six or eight words in pencil, and transfers it to his waistcoat pocket. Afterwards, deliberately dotting every "i" and crossing every "t," he writes down upon the second leaf the name of the barcarole for Mrs. Baltimore, presents it to her with a bow, then returns to the piano, amidst bridesmaids and groomsmen and lovers and all, and addresses Leah.

"And here are the words—the last words of the romance you asked me for, Miss Pascal." Clearly and aloud he speaks; Colonel Pascal, Lord Stair, Jack himself, may hear every syllable. "I had forgotten them till this moment."

And quick as thought the folded slip of paper is transferred from Danton's waistcoat pocket into Leah's hand. Bell Baltimore, not unversed in the art of surreptitious note-giving, watches the whole transaction under shelter of her fan, and arrives at her own conclusions.

Well, and the evening comes to a close. The weary farce is acted out, Jack Chamberlayne's adieu spoken, the final adieu before he shall meet his bride at the altar, and Leah, guarded to the last by Bell and by the children, gets to the quiet of her own bedroom and to liberty. Need I tell you with what trembling haste she locks her door, how eagerly her fingers unclose upon the paper that may be her warrant of life or death, with what blinded eyes she reads?

"In the Atelier, when the house is quiet to-night. Come."

So run the "last words of the romance." Oh insolence, in their altered position, that he should dare address her thus, demand an interview as a matter of right! Oh joy, that he is near, and that he loves her still! She flings the paper down amidst the gewgaws and trinkets that strew her dressing-table, she snatches it up to raise it to her lips. She pales with anger, she flushes with soft repentant tenderness. "In the Atelier, when the house is quiet to-night. Come."

The request is an insult, yet she must needs accede to it, were it but to tell him so. To remain away would imply distrust in her own strength, belief in Danton's. She will go, even at the risk of discovery; go, if only to say those five words "I love you no longer,"

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and so take leave of him, and of everything connected with the mawkish name of love, for evermore. And deciding thus, she holds the note forth for instant destruction in the candle; watches it, cold and resolute, until its corners begin to curl above the flame; then snatches away her hand, and with a passion of tears hides the paper in her breast. "Oh, my love—oh, my miserable broken life—oh, that I might die to-night, that he might feel the weight for ever of having killed me!"

She sits, her head clasped between her hands, while tears rain down her cheeks—scalding tears, such as only the first, selfish, inconsolable grief of youth can produce.

A discreet tap at the bedroom door makes her start guiltily. It is Mrs. Baltimore's maid with a request that Miss Pascal, if not too tired, will come down for a little fireside chat with her mistress before bedtime?

Fireside chat with Bell Baltimore—panegyrics on flounces, orange-flower wreaths, and Brussels veils, *to-night!* Well, if only to turn away suspicion, it must be gone through, like the rest of the hypocrisies that the next forty-eight hours hold in store. Leah bathes her eyes in cold water, rubs her pallid cheeks till they glow again, and in five minutes' time is standing at her friend's door, the conventional smiles, the conventional falsehoods ready on her miserable lips. So good of dear Bell to send for her . . . . ah, and what a sweet, sweet wrapper—real Mechlin, of course? And the lining of that becoming rose-coloured taffetas! Now they can have one of their good old gossips, just as they used to have in Bell's dressing-room at Scarborough.

The good old gossips, in which the friends were wont to discuss the ultimate fate of Mr. Chamberlayne!

Mrs. Baltimore is in possession of the state, or visitor's apartment of the Bonchrétien establishment. No meagre camp-bedstead, no curtainless windows are here. Silk-lined draperies, warm carpets, ormoulu and looking-glasses abound. A wood-fire, piled half way up the chimney, blazes on the hearth. On the dressing-table is ranged a regiment of scent-bottles, trinkets, ivory brushes; all the raw materials of war, without which a veteran coquette would no more travel than would an experienced general without gunpowder. Bell, herself, reclines in an arm-chair beside the fire, her delicate person swathed in embroideries and ribbons, her head denuded of its towering puffs, and with coils of blonde hair simply wound round it for the night. Novelists of the sterner sex talk of the midnight conferences when heroines appear before each other in tears, and their back hair. Experience of actual life informs us that women are as reticent of displaying the one as the other. Leah has wiped away the traces of her tears, as of so many crimes. Bell has still ten pounds'-worth of M. Isidore's best workmanship round her head.

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"You dear, extravagant old Bell, how nice you look—just like the heroine in a French novel! And what a room Bonchrétien has produced for you! You should see the den the children and I inhabit; no curtains, no carpet, no fire. But, to be sure, the Prince Charming gets us boarded, all three in a lump, for a hundred francs a-week."

"Poor dear Prince Charming," says Bell; "I declare only to look at his face does one good. He radiates with satisfaction."

"And gratitude to you, Bell, the saviour of the family. Ah, well, I hope poor Jack will feel the same kind of gratitude six months hence."

And with a sigh, too audible to be altogether real, Leah draws up another easy-chair beside the hearth and sinks therein; precisely in such a position that the light of the fire falls, with searching brilliancy, upon her face.

Bell Baltimore watches her in silence. "If I were not assured of your happiness, Leah," she remarks, presently, "if I were not certain that your heart is as light as heart can be, I should say that you had been crying."

"And what if I have been crying?" says the girl, promptly. "What if I cry every night of my life, just now? You know me on the surface only, Bell. You don't give me credit for a single human feeling. Do you think it costs me nothing to leave those two dear children, and——"

"And your dear papa. Of course it must cost you infinite suffering to bid the Prince Charming good-bye! I ought to have remembered that when I spoke. What a delightful person your friend M. Danton seems, Leah!"

The blow is struck quickly, with precision; but Leah does not stagger by a hair's-breadth under the shock. "M. Danton has a remarkably fine tenor voice," she observes, with excellently assumed indifference to the subject.

"And quite one of the handsomest faces I have seen. He reminded me, at once, of Guiglini (you are too young to remember poor Guiglini); just the same fine eyes and delicate line of profile."

It is Leah's turn to be silent. Not remembering Guiglini, how can she be expected to enlarge on the beauty of his eyes or profile?

"Much as I should dislike this boarding-house existence," goes on Bell, "there is one decided advantage in it—you are thrown with picturesque people, such as you would never otherwise meet."

"People like Lord Stair, for instance," says Leah. Evidently the conversation interests her not, for she has to repress a yawn, and raises her handkerchief to her lips.

"Well, even Lord Stair is more picturesque in the Rue Castiglione than he would be in London. But I spoke of M. Danton. Out of a house like this, you would never get a chance of being in the same

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room with a person like M. Danton. And he is charming! Your father mentioned his circumstances to me, poor fellow; but of course that has nothing to do with talent. An artist is an artist. I can assure you, Leah, I quite enjoyed my evening."

The stiletto point finds its way where the straightforward dagger thrust was powerless. "He who ran might read that you enjoyed yourself, Bell! For my own part, I must say I thought you a little cruel. Considering your long lists of killed and wounded, could you not be satisfied without the slaughter of our poor obscure victim, like M. Danton?"

"You mean that I laid myself out for M. Danton's conquest?" says Bell, with her chill smile. "Well, this is about the first time I have been accused of a weakness à la Maggie McDormond! I can understand most phases of mental depravity," she adds, lightly; "but that particular one—a woman stooping to accept notice from a man beneath herself—is beyond me."

The firelight quivers and dances on the faces of the two cousins, on Bell Baltimore who allured, on Leah Pascal who accepted, Jack Chamberlayne. Bell is upright, alert, watchful, the conscious virtues of a Cornelia on her cold blonde face! Leah's eyes are fixed upon the blazing embers, her hands lie listlessly on her lap, the expression of lassitude that follows any strong mental excitement is visible upon her whole person.

"'A man beneath herself.' If I were sufficiently wide awake to argue, we would have that question out, Bell. I should like to know how you interpret the word 'beneath.' But I am really mortally tired to-night. When we were in the drawing-room I listened to all your voices as though I were in a dream, hearing rather than understanding."

"You are thoroughly overwrought, Leah," says Bell, with meaning. "And persons in just that kind of state have an unpleasant trick of falling seriously ill! If you are wise you will not stir from your own room to-morrow. One wants all one's nerve to get through a wedding gracefully. And honestly and truly, you are looking frightfully ill, child. You have aged by three years since I saw you last."

Leah not replying to the compliment, Bell has to resume the burthen of making conversation unassisted, and for half-an-hour more carries it on without slackening speed. Dress, scandal, the delightful golden future that lies before Jack Chamberlayne's wife, the certain conquests and successes of next season's campaign—these are Bell's themes; not unwisely chosen! In a certain kind of shallow cleverness, a certain skin-deep knowledge of the weaknesses of human nature, very few women can surpass Bell Baltimore. At last the clock above the fire-place strikes one.

"And all my chances of beauty-sleep are over for to-night," cries

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Leah, rising with a start. "Bell, if I look as plain as my best friends could wish on Wednesday, I shall have you to thank, remember. These ghostly vigils are a fatal preparation for dead white silks and a daylight complexion."

Bell follows her to the door, and when kisses have been exchanged, holds the girl's feverish hand in her own. "Leah," she whispers, "will you forgive me if I offer you one little bit of commonplace advice? I promise never to ask a question, never to go back to the subject while we live; but all my hardly-gained experience of the world makes it an absolute duty for me to speak."

"Advice—duty? I—I don't know what you mean, Bell," stammers Leah, changing colour painfully, and trying, with poor success, to smile. "The best advice you can give me is, to go to sleep as soon as possible."

"Yes, Leah, go to sleep; and even in your dreams refrain from listening to one more syllable of the *last words of the romance*. Good night, my dear."

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Hamlet at Home and Abroad.

It is not often that the highest productions of genius find universal acceptance among gentle and simple alike. The dramatic form has this advantage over others in which thought and power may be clothed that it challenges the spectator's attention at once, without putting him to any obvious exertion of his mind. The ear and eye need not be educated to see and hear a play, as they must for the proper appreciation of painting or of music. The play has also the advantage of appealing to both senses at once, of presenting living and speaking pictures in the place of forms or sounds alone. Thus the taste for the drama has ever been more common than that for other arts, and thus that drama which is full of humanity and full also of stirring incidents centred round a character comprehending almost every mood and passion of man, has ever been popular above all its fellows. As the truth and variety of this character have never been equalled, so each man, as he reads or listens to Hamlet's thoughts, feels that some part of his own inner life is being passed before him; and there is no way so straight and sure as this to the sympathies of a listener. The favour in which for these and other reasons the play of 'Hamlet' was held by the public seems to have been contemporaneous with its production. The first edition appeared in 1603, the second in 1604, and in that year Anthony Scoloker, making a dedication to his poem 'Daiphantus,' wrote that "his epistle should be like friendly Shakespeare's tragedies where the comedian rides, when the tragedian stands on tip-toe. Faith it should please all like Prince Hamlet." Coming down to a later age, we find that indefatigable play-goer Pepys recording two visits to 'Hamlet,' but on both occasions he speaks less of the play than of the admirable acting of Betterton, whose Hamlet, according to tradition, has never been equalled. It may be noted that this actor was fortunate in obtaining Shakspeare's own views of the character at second hand. Pepys was probably happier as a judge of acting than as a critic of a play, for he dismisses the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' with lofty contempt as "the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life;" and on another occasion he makes this remarkable entry in his diary: "To Deptford by water reading 'Othello, Moore of Venice,' which I ever heretofore esteemed a mighty good play, but having so lately read 'The Adventures of Five Houres,' it seems a mean thing." It is sad to reflect that the present generation has never had a chance of seeing the play which could thus eclipse Othello. Our present purpose, however, is

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not with Pepys, but with the poet upon whose works he pronounced judgment after his fashion.

It is well known that Shakspeare never absolutely invented the plots of his plays, but fashioned them from stories already in existence. To this rule the plot of Hamlet forms no exception, and as attention is now particularly directed to that play, it may not be uninteresting to give some account of the material out of which the master moulded his greatest work. The original story of Hamlet is found in 'The Danish History of Saxo Grammaticus.' The king whom Shakspeare calls Claudius was named Fengo, and the first striking difference between the history of Amlethus and the play of Hamlet is in the fact that Fengo made no secret of his brother's murder, but, as the historian says, concealed the atrocity of the deed with so bold a cunning that he contrived to give his crime the appearance of a good deed; for he asserted that Gerutha (the Gertrude of the play), although her character was of the most amiable kind, yet had suffered from a violent hatred on the part of her husband, whom for her sake he had killed; because it seemed a monstrous thing that a woman of the kindest and most open heart should continue to endure the weight of her husband's contempt. And, adds Saxo Grammaticus, with a quaint simplicity, "this perversion of the facts was not put forth in vain." Amlethus, after his father's murder, adopted the plan of Brutus, and assumed a character of stupid imbecility. His favourite occupation was to make sharp stakes of wood, which he hardened in the fire, and when asked why he did so he replied that he was preparing means to avenge his father's death. This not unnaturally aroused the suspicions of Fengo, who caused a spy to be set upon Amlethus, to discover whether his madness was real or assumed, in the person of a woman of light reputation. By the assistance of a friend, however, and the connivance of the woman, who had an affection for him, Amlethus escaped this device, but did not succeed in lulling the suspicions of Fengo. A councillor of the king's (the Corambis or Polonius of Hamlet) then suggested that Amlethus should have a private interview with his mother, at which he should be present in concealment, and report to the king if, as was probable, the prince should drop his mask of madness. The astute Amlethus, however, divined at once for what reason the interview was arranged. Accordingly he entered his mother's room in his character of an idiot, crowing like a cock, flapping his arms up and down, and jumping along the wall. By these crafty means he stumbled upon the hidden spy, whom he instantly slew, after which he threw his body to the pigs. Upon this ensues a dialogue between Amlethus and his mother, which is the origin of the famous closet scene, and then, as in the play, Amlethus is sent to England with two companions bearing secret instructions for his death. Before he goes he gives two curious

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directions to his mother: the one to have the great hall of the palace hung with light curtains; the other to celebrate his obsequies when he has been away for a year.

The adventures of the Prince in England are curious for the resemblance which they bear to those Northern and German tales in which Jack or Dummling surprises every one by the wit and shrewdness of his answers to difficult questions. Speaking of German tales tempts one to diverge for a brief space, in order to mention a ludicrous early German version of Hamlet. In this, the escape of Hamlet from impending death by his uncle's creatures is accomplished in a fashion which strangely illustrates the mixture of childishness with profundity in the German character. Two sailors, armed with blunderbusses, are charged to kill Hamlet, who accepts his fate with resignation, but resorts to the device often adopted by persons imperilled in German fairy tales, of asking for time to say his prayers. To this request the assassins accede, when Hamlet, bidding them hold their guns ready pointed, kneels down between them, and tells them that at a given signal he will jump up and they shall shoot him through the head. Accordingly, he gives the signal, but as, with singular fatuity, they do not wait to see him jump up, and he omits that part of the project, it results that they shoot each other instead of their intended victim. It is amusing to find the nation which has grown to believe that Hamlet is its especial property making the Prince of Denmark play such clown's tricks as this. To return, however, to the Amlethus of Saxo Grammaticus. This wily person, having substituted for the orders commanding his own death others requesting that his companions should be killed, and the King of England's daughter given to him in marriage, proceeded to distinguish himself by his behaviour at a feast given by the King of England in honour of his guests. Here he refused to touch any of the things provided, saying that the bread was blood-stained, the drink tasted of iron, and the meat had a death-like savour. He, moreover, announced that both the King and Queen were of servile extraction. The King was so struck with these speeches, which the companions of Amlethus set down as the babble of an idiot, that he caused particular inquiry to be made, and found that the bread was made from corn which grew on a battle-field, that the water was impregnated with the rust of old swords lying in the stream's bed, and the animals killed for the banquet had feasted on a thief's body. He also discovered that the hints of Amlethus as to his own and his wife's birth were only too well founded. Upon this he was so overcome by the wisdom of the Danish Prince, that he immediately married him to his daughter, and had his two companions killed, thinking thereby to please him. The cunning Amlethus, however, made a great outcry at this, and demanded and obtained a large sum of money as compensation for the murder; which money he

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melted down and poured into two hollow sticks. After this he lived merrily in England until he had been absent from Denmark a year, when he returned thither, assuming again, upon his arrival, his cast-off disguise of imbecility. The courtiers of Fengo, who had just been attending his obsequies, were somewhat surprised at seeing him return alive, and asked him what had become of his two companions, in answer to which Amlethus produced his two hollow sticks. Then, with the craft which always characterised him, he began to dance in an idiotic manner, and that his robes might not impede him, he tied a sword-belt and sword round his waist. As the point of this sword projected in an awkward way through the scabbard, the courtiers fastened it tight up with a bar so that it could not be drawn. After this Amlethus succeeded in making them all so drunk that the whole Court lay helpless about the great hall of the palace. And now we see what a deep and malignant purpose was in the Prince's apparently simple request to his mother to have curtains hung about the hall. These curtains he tore down, and having enveloped with them the inert bodies of the courtiers, he fastened them so ingeniously to the floor with the sharp wood stakes which he had prepared long ago, that the more the revellers attempted, on waking, to free themselves from the toils the more involved they became. Amlethus now set the curtains alight, and by this means burnt up the whole Court. He then went to the chamber of his uncle Fengo, whom he found asleep, with a sword lying on his bed. This sword Amlethus exchanged for his own useless one, and then awoke Fengo and killed him. So ends, so far as the dramatist is concerned with it, the history of Amlethus as told by Saxo Grammaticus. It will be seen that the tender, melancholy, wavering prince of the poet is here little better than a daring, cunning ruffian, full of a malignant humour. Instead of failing, overburdened by the task laid upon him, he is fully prepared for every emergency, and instead of ending a terrible struggle with his own death, he succeeds to the throne, having disposed of all his foes with a rough and summary justice. The narrative of the Danish historian is pretty closely followed in the 'Hystorie of Hamblet,' translated from Belleforest, to which Shakspeare probably went for his materials. There are, however, in this numerous additions and improvements; the scene between Hamblet and his mother especially is much amplified, and written, as is the whole novel, with a forcible simplicity. Indeed, in one particular, "not to speak it profanely," this scene in the novel contains a finer element than is found in the play. In the former, when Hamblet has exhibited his mother's guilt in all its hideousness, she, instead of being overcome by a facile grief and a barren remorse, takes a sudden grasp of the situation, and, rising with a revived dignity, encourages Hamblet in his projects, speaking "with the like love that a vertuous mother may use to entertaine her owne

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childe." This course, however, would hardly be consistent with the character of the Queen as it stands in Shakspeare, where it is marked by a weak sensuousness, displayed alike in her passion for Claudius and in the open lavishness of her caresses to her first husband. It has been lately observed by a critic that among the early feelings which combined to form Hamlet's character, was an admiration for the love existing between his father and mother. The words to which this comment refers will scarcely bear such an interpretation. "Why," exclaims the Prince, "she would hang on him, as if increase of appetite had grown by what it fed on." There is little sign of admiration to be discovered here, and the whole tone of the speech is one of disgustful scorn.

Between the story of Hamlet, which has been less abridged, and Shakspeare's play, there are many noteworthy points of resemblance and difference; a reference to some of these may possibly throw light upon matters which have appeared obscure or inconsistent. Critics have observed, and with good reason, that the easy consent given by Ophelia to the project of her playing the spy upon the man whom she loves, is out of harmony with the simple graciousness of her character. Now, in the original story there is no Ophelia, but there is a woman who plays the spy upon Hamlet, and who from her antecedents would probably offer little objection to such an employment. Is it not possible that this circumstance may account for the difficulty? The poet's inspiration created Ophelia, but it was necessary for the action of the play that the original incident of the spy should be retained, and the dramatist neglected the perfect reconciliation of his character with his plot. There is a popular notion, that because Shakspeare is the greatest poet and dramatist who has ever lived, therefore every detail of his work must be *totus teres atque rotundus*. Instances to prove that this is not the case might without difficulty be multiplied; it would be indeed miraculous if it were so, considering the vast amount which the poet gave to the world and the brief space in which it was produced. The other similarities between the story and the play to which it is proposed to call attention, are remarkable as showing how the merest hints were worked by Shakspeare into the form of beauty which he alone could compose. Thus, from the reply of Hamlet to the King, when asked to account for the disappearance of the murdered councillor, is evolved the dialogue between Claudius and Hamlet in Act IV., Scene III. of the play. This scene, since the first night of the representation of Hamlet at the Lyceum, has been omitted from regard to the exigencies of time. It is a pity that this has been deemed necessary, for there is no finer specimen of Hamlet's bitter, hysterical humour to be found in the play. His speech here, "a man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm," as also the fanciful

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speculations in the graveyard scene upon the transmutations of flesh, may be referred to the riddle proposed and solved by the Hamlet of the story at the King of England's banquet, where the bread which he pronounced blood-stained was made from corn grown upon a battle-field. Again, the exchange of foils in the fencing-scene has always appeared an awkward device, no matter how well it may be managed by the actors concerned. It would, perhaps, seem too curious to trace this to the exchange made by Hamlet of his own useless sword for that of his uncle in the story.

Some reference has been already made to the high estimation in which Hamlet, before and since the time of Goethe, has been held by German critics, one of whom has been so far carried away by a mixture of patriotic and dramatic enthusiasm as to declare that the character of Hamlet is none other than that of the whole German nation. This is a heavy responsibility with which to saddle the already overburdened Prince. But although the solemn extravagance of such a notion may be somewhat absurd, it must be admitted that the tenacity which has served the Germans so well in other matters, has led to their having a far better theatrical system than can be hoped for in England, until it is recognised that the dramatic art shares the claim of its sisters to public support as a means of instruction. At the subsidized theatres of Germany Hamlet appears, not as here, at irregular intervals, to be greeted, as the case may be, with cold and enforced respect, or with a feverish burst of enthusiasm, but as an enduring type of dramatic beauty which it is good for the people to look upon from time to time. It may be objected that this induces a sameness of interpretation among German actors of Hamlet; but as there are numberless methods of interpreting the character, there is no great harm in one which has the merit of being thoughtful and consistent, finding a wide acceptation. The Hamlet of Dettmer, who succeeded to Emile Devrient's position in the Hof Theater at Dresden, is a performance which exhibits considerable study and power, but is marred by a phlegmatic sloth that one is not accustomed to associate with the finely-strung, excitable Prince. This, it is true, is shaken off in the more emotional passages, where Dettmer's rendering, especially of the hysterical passion in the play scene, is singularly fine, but is present in the speculative soliloquies. The Hamlet of Dettmer delivers the "to be or not to be," not as if the words were the natural expression of thoughts following each other spontaneously, but rather as if he were impelled thereto by a feeling that it is his duty to moralize upon every fitting occasion, by that sense, so to speak, of "goodboyism," which is strong in most German minds. This feeling has its good influences also, for it is partly this which leads to the harmonious effect of the whole play as produced in Germany. Every character, from Hamlet to Rosen-

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crantz, is played by an actor competent to fill it, and willing to devote study to its performance. A fine effect, too, is gained by retaining the scene of Fortinbras's entry at the conclusion, which in England is always omitted. The contrast of the conqueror's "drums, colours, and attendants," with the scene upon which he enters, of war's triumphant pomp with the tragical conclusion of Hamlet's struggle, produces an impression which appeals alike to the student and to the seeker after theatrical effect.

Looking at the wide difference between French and German taste, it is not surprising that a play which is very popular in the one country should be not at all popular in the other. It is through Hamlet, however, that Shakspeare is chiefly known and reverenced in France. The play has seldom been represented there: in its original form never. The ghost has always been a stumbling-block to the French mind, which sympathises but little with such supernatural machinery. The version of Hamlet by Ducis, which was produced in 1769, when Molé played the Prince, substitutes for the vision of the "majesty of buried Denmark" the poor device of dreams, in which Hamlet's father calls for vengeance both on Claudius and Gertrude. Even this touch of the supernatural drew down the wrath of Voltaire, who wrote of it in bitter scorn: "les ombres vont devenir à la mode . . . . nous allons tomber dans l'outré et le gigantesque: adieu les sentiments du cœur!" It is amusing to find Voltaire objecting to the absence of heart in Hamlet. The play scene Ducis feebly replaces by a narrative of the King of England's murder, told by Hamlet to Claudius, in order to discover if his suspicions and dreams point to the truth. Either from the poverty of this device or from the hardness of his heart, Claudius betrays no kind of emotion at the recital; and Hamlet is reduced to extorting a confession from the Queen by suddenly thrusting his father's funeral urn into her hands. After this, follows a combat between the King's followers and Hamlet's, which leads to the death of the former and the installation of the latter on the throne. The Queen kills herself in a fit of remorse, and the play concludes with a charmingly stilted speech from Hamlet, in the course of which he observes: "Privé de tous les miens dans ce palais funeste, mes malheurs sont comblés, mais—ma vertu me reste." One part of the plot, as arranged by Ducis, is deliciously characteristic. The marriage of Gertrude with Hamlet, the father, is, according to him, brought about for political reasons; the man who really loves her and whom she really loves is Claudius, who is not brother to the King, but merely first prince of the blood. The Queen is happy enough in her marriage for a long time; but on seeing Claudius again her old passion revives. Claudius, who is by this time a widower with one daughter, Ophelia, is by no means unwilling to return her love, and so the murder of the King is accomplished, although at the last moment

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Gertrude attempts to prevent it. There are other curious divergences from Shakspeare. Gertrude, in spite of her passion for Claudius, refuses to marry him unless he will proffer allegiance to Hamlet; and the inevitable confidant of the old French drama is dragged in to hear the story of her guilt. The only modern version of the play which has obtained any success in France is that of Dumas père, which in the main follows the course of the original. This play was produced in 1847, and was performed 135 successive nights at the Théâtre Historique. Rouvier played it at a later date at the Odéon. The last appearance of Hamlet on the French dramatic stage was at the Gaîté, in 1867, when Madame Judith attempted the part of the Prince with no success. On the lyric stage, M. Faure's performance of Hamlet is remarkable as an instance of how much a great actor can make out of sorry materials. From time to time there is a talk of producing Hamlet at the Théâtre Français; but it does not seem likely that this talk will ever result in action. It may be doubted, indeed, whether the audience which will patiently sit through the polished tirades of 'Zaire' would find any great enthusiasm for a play which is as unlike as possible to the classical tragedy of France, where all dramas which aspire to the level of Hamlet are governed by hard and fast rules of convention. It would be curious to see what a modern Parisian dramatist would produce out of the story of Hamlet. One can imagine Octave Feuillet adopting Ducis' view of the Queen's first marriage, and working up her character into that dangerous type of which he is so fond; the woman who is without principles, but has so delicate a pride that no ordinary love affair can give her any interest—who, to use M. Feuillet's own words, "resembles a star escaped from its orbit and governed by no law; who deals to-day with heroism, to-morrow with crime." The beauty and simplicity of Ophelia would be skilfully employed as a foil to the gloomy figure of the Queen throughout. It is difficult to conjecture what part Hamlet himself would play in the story, for it is not often that any interest attaches, in M. Feuillet's plays, to unmarried men or women, except that which arises from their being themselves attached to married ones. In any aspect, the story affords ample scope for the conflicts of passion which M. Feuillet delights to analyse; and the concluding scene might prove superior in attraction to that which ended 'Le Sphinx,' inasmuch as it offers three deaths by poison instead of one. Under the more brutal touch of the younger Dumas the story would probably become less pleasant. He would leave not one trace of high principle or noble motive to relieve the darkness of crime which overshadows the play. Every character, Hamlet, Ophelia, even the gravedigger, would be involved in a mesh of doubtful intrigue. The drama would convey the impression that no human being can escape from the nets of sin; that there is no

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unpolluted mind, no honest heart to be found in all the world; but according to the author's view, it would present an excellent moral. It is difficult for English readers or spectators to discover wherein lies the boasted morality of M. Dumas' pieces. It cannot be denied, however, that they are full of brilliancy, skill, and keenness, in spite of the hideous and degraded view of life which they offer. And they are probably more successful in attracting a Parisian audience than would ever be that Hamlet which Voltaire pronounced to be the dream of a drunken savage, with some flashes of beautiful thoughts.

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Romance in a Paris Pension.

Part I.

"Women certainly are a horrid invention! How I wish that a Black Plague or a second Deluge would carry you all off! What an abode of peace, what an oasis this world would then be!"

This chivalrous amiable sentiment is uttered by my cousin, a fine young man of five-and-twenty, about six-foot-two in height, and with an eyeglass always stuck in his eye, which seems to expand when he gives vent to ferocious invectives against my sex. The above philippic is provoked by my determination to go and spend a few months in Paris in order to study painting at Madame Latour's *atelier*. I had been meditating some time upon this move, when a letter received that morning from my friend Olga Soultikoff, a young Russian, then in Paris, chiefly for painting purposes, decided me. This is the letter, which, unfortunately, I had read to my cousin:

"Chez Madame Dupont,
"Quai des Grands Augustins, Paris.

"My dear Louisa,—You must keep the promise you made me to come and spend some time in

'Ce cher pays de France,
Berceau de ton enfance.'

Come at once, to brightness and sunshine. How can you remain so long in dreary, dirty, dismal, damp, depressing London? where the sun only shines through a thick yellow flannel dressing-gown, as if that luminary suffered from a cold in his head and gets up late, well muffled in blankets. The London climate has upon me the effect of a pall, and the dismal grandeur, contrasted with the hideous poverty, makes me shudder. There is no lightness, no *abandon*, no grace; nobody seems to care for anybody else, and everybody tries to outshine his neighbour. Still there is much goodness in Old England: roast beef, porter, and plum-pudding are the emblems of Great Britain; solid, heavy, respectable, wholesome. Perhaps champagne may be typical of France: light, airy, intoxicating; but my artistic temperament prefers this to the respectable heaviness of England. However, I must not speak too harshly about that mighty country, as I have only spent a few months there. Italy and France are the Promised Lands or the artist nature. This is a delightful *pension*, not far from the

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Louvre—that sanctuary consecrated to the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the great old masters! Madame Dupont is a nice little woman; never interferes with anybody, never asks indiscreet questions; *enfin*, this is Liberty Hall. There is a live Genius flourishing here, or rather, like most geniuses, on the brink of ruin. He wears his hair long, dresses very shabbily, has holes in his wide-awake—for the sake of ventilation, he declares; he is stuffed with queer, strong, artistic ideas, and he and I are great friends. There are about forty boarders, most of them odd, but come and judge for yourself. I go to Madame Latour's studio; she is a great artist, colouring gorgeous, worthy of Rubens or Correggio; she is also a musician and a mathematician, is *originale* and eccentric, and is separated from her husband, simply because Monsieur Latour bored her and was always prowling about her studio; so she told him that her apartment was too small and he had better go off. The meek husband obeyed, and he is now in Belgium, quite happy, for he fears his artist wife. They had one child, but Madame Latour one day, in a fit of absence of mind, sat upon her baby, and, as she is a very stout woman, the baby never recovered being sat upon, and died a few days after. She did not feel the loss much, and now lives but for Art; her enthusiasm, her love, are concentrated in that. In her early youth she loved passionately, was deceived, and so she threw her mind, her soul, her very body, into her painting. If I were a man, I should be devoted to such a woman. She has so much soul, so much power; her great black eyes shine like seas of light, with that sacred fire which seems to consume her. Such women are rare because genius is rare. Madame Latour, though a genius, is fond of the pomps and vanities of this wicked world; she intends giving a grand fancy ball in six weeks from this, and I want you particularly to be there. Write by return of post to let me know what day I am to expect you, and do not be persuaded into not coming by that cousin of yours. Is he still a woman-hater? *Au fond*, I think he loves us all too much, and that to conceal his tender heart he puts on an armour of cynicism and indifference.

"Your affectionate friend,
"OLGA SOULTIKOFF.

"P.S.—Tell your cousin that I heard that he is already much in love. I am glad to hear it, for when he is married he will think better of all women, and, when he gets into Parliament, will espouse our cause, stand up for and discuss our rights and our wrongs, perhaps vote for our having the franchise."

My cousin Horace scowls atrociously over this *post scriptum*. "Fall in love indeed! No one will ever find me suffering from that complaint."

"But you are certain to be in that condition some day or other,

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and the attack will be bad; for love is like the measles: if you get it early in life you recover easily, but once on the shady side of thirty you will suffer terribly."

"There might have been some danger for me if I had lived a century ago, when there were a few charming women on the earth—quiet innocent beings, satisfied with the sphere of home duties; but now they are merely amphibious creatures struggling to the front, wanting to take our place, to govern the world, to vote, to get into Parliament, to become doctors, clergymen—I hate them all! There is an open antagonism between the sexes, an uncivil war. And you, instead of keeping in your orbit, which means happiness, want to join that horrid faction of strong-minded females—a third sex, a social excrescence. Do not be a blooming idiot. Remain at home; you are more likely to marry than if you scamper about the Continent and become an artist. Men do not like independent women; we do not want to be ruled by our wives. Women ought to have the qualities which are generally wanting in men; to complete us, as it were."

"Ah! you are getting afraid of us. You lords of the creation, you do not like to look up to, but down upon us; but surely, Horace, you could not respect me if I remained at home for ever, tatting and tatting, with a kind of label all over me, 'Waiting to be married. Fragile.' I know a woman who hates her sex; her advice is, matrimony, *coûte que coûte*—to go off in shiploads to the colonies, like so many droves of cattle, in order to get husbands. I think it a degrading notion. There is an immense majority of women in Great Britain; we cannot all get married; so what are the women who have no filthy lucre to do?"

"Burn them alive," growls Horace, his eyeglass getting to look wicked and large, "and I think that I should begin with Mademoiselle Olga. She is a dangerous young person, very *exaltée*, enthusiastic, wild—an undetected young lunatic; but I am sorry, though, for her; she is young, alone, and extremely pretty," adds my cousin, relenting, and the eyeglass slips off. "She is an orphan too, poor girl! no one to look after her. But you have no excuse, so I advise you to remain in London, and take plenty of exercise, for you seem to me to be expanding fearfully, and that may spoil your chances in life."

Now this is a stab, a Parthian shot. The skeleton in my closet is the dread of growing like Falstaff, or a more recent hero. I had tried Banting, but to no effect. However, I do not betray my mortification, only shrug my shoulders, leave the room in order not to hear any more unpleasant truths, and write off to Olga; for if a thing has to be done, let it be done quickly. Then I go out and post the letter, for I never believe that my letters reach their destination unless I drop them with my own hands into the letter-box.

It is with a mixed sensation of pleasure and regret that later on I find myself at the station alone! A sense of loneliness creeps over me.

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I almost wish to be back in the snug English drawing-room, listening to Horace's invectives and sermons. Here all is turmoil, life, bustle, glare, glitter, restlessness, noise of cabs, porters rushing about with big trunks, everybody and everything hurrying to and fro. Suddenly I hear my name called out, two arms are round my neck, and there stands bright, pretty little Olga, accompanied by two gentlemen.

"So delighted to see you, *chérie!* Welcome to la belle France! Let me introduce you to two of my friends who are staying at the boarding-house—both Englishmen—Mr. Morris and Mr. Blake."

We all shake hands.

"Mr. Morris is evidently the genius," I mentally ejaculate; he looks helpless, bewildered, and inspired; he wears a velveteen coat quite clean, and his wideawake is guiltless of holes; he is rather handsome, very dark, just a dash of the demon about him. Mr. Blake is a contrast—a short, spruce, dapper little figure, dressed most carefully, quite *un petit maître;* he has a lovely white flower in his button-hole, and looks as if he had just stepped out of a band-box.

I confide my keys to him, and he politely goes off and looks after my luggage, which has to undergo the process of being examined.

"Now, Mr. Morris, won't you go and get us a *voiture?*" says Olga, in her sweet, foreign accent. "I do wonder if he will be able to do that; for of course you have guessed that he is the Genius, always up in the heights—a great deal of power about him, but not much practicality."

But Olga's remarks are cut short by the reappearance of Mr. Blake, followed by a porter carrying my trunk.

"The *fiacre* is waiting. What a wonder that it is not a hearse!" exclaims Mr. Blake, with a shrug of compassion. "I did not think that Morris could discern one vehicle from another."

The trunk is placed on the roof, my innumerable parcels fill up nearly the cab, Olga and I squeeze into a corner, and the two men bid us good evening.

Off we rattle through the brilliant streets. It is a lovely evening in May, the trees are clothed in delicate young green, the stars are just beginning to shine, the shops are beautifully lit, the streets are crowded. How poetical Paris looks from the Place de la Concorde on to the bridge! The towers of Notre Dame and of St. Jacques la Boucherie, standing there like guardian angels protecting the beloved city. The dismal prison of the Conciergerie, the ruins of the Tuileries, lend a solemnity to the scene. The Seine is twinkling with many lights, the bathing-houses are slightly lit up, giving it a weird appearance. A few dark barges are gliding warily by, like dreary, troubled spirits. The equestrian statue of Henri Quatre looks well in the evening light—the gay monarch there in effigy watching over his dear Paris. At last the cab stops.

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Olga rings a bell; the door is opened by a neat *bonne* in a very white cap and apron, holding a brass candlestick. The *bonne* ushers us into a large sitting-room furnished with crimson curtains, chairs, &c., gilt clock and ornaments on the mantle-piece; and the floor is so highly waxed that it is almost impossible to walk without slipping. A tiny lady in black silk comes forward.

"This is my friend, Miss Louisa Larcom," says Olga in French.

Madame Dupont makes a graceful *révérence*, is enchanted to see me, inquires after my journey, and says that she will send me up *du thé* in my room.

Olga says that I shall have tea with her in her own sitting-room. So, bidding the little lady good-night, we go upstairs to Olga's apartment.

"What a lovely *sanctum sanctorum!*" I exclaim; and certainly it is a charming room worth describing. The furniture is of bright blue damask silk, white lace curtains, and the *fond* of the carpet is white, with wreaths of roses entwined with blue ribbon. A bookcase of carved oak filled with beautifully-bound books. On all sides are statuettes of Dresden china. A Venus de Milo and a Venus de Medici, in bronze, mount guard on each side of the bookcase. A fine Erard piano stands in the middle of the room. On a rosewood easel is a study of a head in black and white, just begun. Out of this room is a small bedroom, with a pretty bed and toilette, all white. Engravings of Ary Scheffer's famous pictures—of 'Les deux Mignons,' 'Ste.-Monique,' and 'Ste.-Augustin,' decorate the walls, besides photographs of nearly all the great masterpieces in art.

"This is your room, leading out of mine," says Olga opening a door. "Of course yours is not so beautiful as mine, for mine is furnished out of my own pocket, and yours is Madame Dupont's taste. Still it is pretty and cosy, furnished in pink *perse*. You have everything *couleur de rose*, and I am all in the blues. Still I am not going to exchange. Now take off your things, and let us make ourselves comfortable. I love luxury, ease, comfort."

So saying, she takes off her walking-dress and puts on a delicious grey, soft cashmere dressing-gown, puts her tiny feet into lovely velvet slippers, and throws herself into a large arm-chair, forces me down into another, and rings the bell for tea.

How pretty she looks now, as she indolently reclines back. She is small; her figure is round, supple, graceful; her skin is clear and white; her hair, golden and wavy, is plaited round her small well-shaped head; her eyes are very dark and soft, but there is often a twinkle of mischief in them; her mouth is lovely and surrounded by dimples.

"What a luxurious creature! what an epicure you are, Olga!" I exclaim, half enviously, thinking of all the gifts and good things

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she had. "How thoroughly happy you ought to be! You have everything you want—beauty, wealth, talent, liberty, youth. You have indeed too much of the good things of this world, you spoilt child of fortune!"

"Yes, I ought to be very happy," she slowly answers, with rather a sad smile; "and it may seem strange and ungrateful on my part to say that I am not so. Happiness is within ourselves, and not derived entirely from outward circumstances. At times I feel quite happy; at others I am low and depressed. I am lonely, for I have no one belonging to me alive. When I feel very low I rush off to Madame Latour, and her influence, the feeling of her genius, seems to put new life into me; but there is a *void* within me. I do not care for people generally, so that I now live but for myself."

A knock at the door: the *bonne* comes in with a tray full of good things, which she deposits on a table close by, inquires if we require her services, and then retires.

"But, Olga, you are sure to be loved by some one worthy of you; you are so young—only two-and-twenty."

"Yes, that is my age; still, at times I feel middle-aged, for I have had great experience of life. Of course I have inspired love, and have tasted the bitterness of it, with little of its sweets!"

"You amaze me!" I exclaim. "You, so admired, so *recherchée*, to talk like this!—you, who seem such a sunbeam, such a butterfly, is it possible that you have cause for talking so? The bitterness of love! —you almost make me laugh. It seems so incongruous for such *un enfant gâté* to talk thus."

"Well, then, I shall give you a few details about my past life, and then you will see if all is gold that glitters, and if I have not reason at times to be a little *triste*. But before I tell you my unfortunate love affair, 'let us eat, drink, and be merry.' This is Russian tea—a treat for you."

How charming she looks, as she gracefully pours out the delicious beverage from a small silver teapot into our two cups! I cannot imagine how so fascinating a girl can ever have had a love disappointment. Her movements, as she rushes about the room, remind me of those of a pet kitten—soft, purring, graceful; the small head is well placed on the sloping shoulders, the eyes are so luminous, the light hair looks like an *auréole* of glory, shedding light around it. Olga has a wonderful inner smile—a smile that Leonardo da Vinci alone could have rendered, and which he has so inimitably painted in that famous portrait, 'La Joconde,' or 'Mona Lisa.'

"We shall get on together," suddenly exclaims Olga, while she is cutting me a large slice of plum cake. "I require a certain kind of sympathy, not pity. As a rule I hate sympathy, for though surrounded by society I live in my own thoughts. I have such a horror

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of being bored. Liberty is my cry—liberty of ideas, of life; no shackles of any sort. I am a Republican at heart, and the conventionalities of society and the lies of the world sicken me."

As she utters these words her eyes flash, her cheeks flush, and she looks like a young goddess of revolt.

Suddenly she rushes to the piano, and sings a wild Russian air, and evidently forgetting me, the tea, and everything else, pours her soul into her music. And then, in a low, tragic voice, with an intensity that appals me, she intones the 'Marseillaise.' It is almost terrible to hear her, her eyes seem to see beyond, and, as she utters these words,

"Amour sacré de la patrie!"

there are tears in her very voice; then, not to give further vent to her emotion, she rattles off 'Le Sabrede mon père,' Schneider's famous song, from Offenbach's 'Grande Duchesse.' I look at Olga with astonishment.

"You are an enigma, a sphinx, an imp, a creature from another world, are you not?"

"Indeed I am not. I belong very much to this earth; only at times I feel so lonely, so dissatisfied with myself, with everybody and everything, that I should like to get away from myself and my thoughts, to rush off to some wild spot, be blown about by the winds of heaven, and have new thoughts and ideas driven into me. Why is there not a Lethe—a wonderful stream where one could take a plunge and forget what one wishes to forget? Music is an intense resource to me, for I can pour out my wrongs and give way to my many moods in music. Sometimes, when painting, I take my brush and create a grotesque demon torturing some wretched soul, and, you may laugh, but it does relieve me; or I tease my cat. I often wish that I could hire a slave, that I might bully him when those dreadful fits of revolt come over me. Of course you must be horrified, and no wonder; but how can I help it, if I have a *diavolina* within me?—perhaps seven devils, and they all kicking inside me. I feel the wretches are there, and some days they are so powerful, that if I did not take a ride on horseback, or some very violent exercise, I should do something wicked."

"What an undisciplined young rebel you are, Olga!"

"It is inherited," she answers. "My mother was an Italian prima donna, with a voice like Malibran. I have been told she had an unhappy home life; her stepmother tortured her by her despotism; her artist nature could not stand the petty worries of a small narrow-minded household; she ran away, went on the stage, loved, was deceived. Disappointed, she married my father, who was a Russian merchant, for his wealth. He was (you know he died when I was

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quite a child) tyrannical, but generous; so my parents were not happy in their short married life. I am the offspring of these two widely different natures: the warm, genial, artistic, imaginative, rebellious Italian on one side; the cruelty, perhaps, from my father's side. So I am an odd mixture, and am not entirely accountable for my moods. I would gladly be different—glad to have no aspiration, no dreams of happiness, no longing for ideal love, no wish for something beyond—to be quiet, unemotional, unimaginative, and satisfied with that state of life to which I have been called. But I am talking of nothing but my horrid self. The fact is, it does me good to give vent to my inner feelings: it is a great sign of friendship, my boring you thus."

"You are not boring me; on the contrary, dear Olga, I am deeply interested, and sympathise with your nature and understand it. You are capable of feeling great unhappiness and great happiness; but you must try and discipline yourself, and not let yourself be run away with. Put a bridle on your wild feelings."

"Yes, you are very wise, Miss Minerva; and I am an ungrateful wretch. Some days, when the sun is bright, I feel so happy that I should like to live on for ever and do some good; but to-day I am *agacée*, mischievous. I should like to scratch some one."

"I shall run away," I exclaim laughing. "But now be sensible, Olga, and tell me all about these little love affairs that seem in a measure to have altered your nature; for when I knew you five years ago you had no bitterness, no cynicism."

"Well, perhaps I had better confide this tale of woe, though, as a rule, I hate talking about myself."

So, leaving the piano, she threw herself upon the soft rug, and placing her pretty perfumed head on my lap, related what follows:

Olga's Love Disappointments.

"Don't you remember, four years ago, meeting at mamma's apartments on the Boulevard des Italiens a young Pole, Stanislas Marilski?"

"Oh yes, very well, for I was much struck with his appearance; he was *distingué* looking, handsome, and artistic; but I only saw him that one evening. Is he the hero?"

"Yes; he was the first man who inspired a new feeling. Before I met him I was a joyous, light, merry, thoughtless girl, *insouciante*. Sufficient for the day was the evil or good thereof, was certainly my motto. But Stanislas Marilski's advent changed the course of my thoughts, and I was no longer as joyous as a bird. I felt that life was a mystery; nature was different, and art was different, from what they had been to me before. I felt a capacity for greater happiness and for greater pain. He was certainly good-looking; but it was not his handsome

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features that attracted me, so much as the peculiarity of his disposition and the originality of his mind. He was an orphan, a rebel, a revolutionist: he believed in nothing that was past; history was a lie to him, he cared but for the future. Melancholy, cynical, passionate, we were both strongly attracted towards each other the minute we met. I met him for the first time at a *bal* at the Hôtel de Ville. I had been dancing merrily about with a very insipid polite Frenchman. I was resting, enjoying thoroughly the bright scene, the music, the lights, the wonderful dresses, the diamonds; when, looking round, I was suddenly attracted by that very pale face and those large, dark, melancholy eyes, gazing at me so keenly. I looked at him, and from that moment I really did feel a different being; a new interest had come into my life. He got introduced to my mother, called at our house; we had long talks together—curious to say, chiefly on political topics. But that ceased. We used to meet out of doors, and have long walks together in unfrequented parts of Paris. He told me that he loved me, but that for a few months he could not make a regular offer of marriage. I did not mind that; to be cared for by such a man was sufficient happiness. And as my mother, who was then in extremely delicate health, allowed me entire liberty, I saw Stanislas every day for five months. One day, calling at a friend's house, she informed me that several people had seen me walking with Mr. Marilski—that remarks were passed; so that my friend had made inquiries; and did I know that Mr. Marilski was engaged to be married to a Polish young lady?—and she mentioned the name. I shall never forget what I felt when she told me this horrible piece of news. The room seemed to whirl round and round; the blood rushed to my throat and head. I tried to conceal my emotion. My friend was shocked at having told me this so abruptly. To cut a long, sad story short, I wrote to Stanislas, telling him what I had just heard. I received a miserable letter from him, confessing that there was an engagement, but that he had ceased to care for the girl, and only loved me, begging me to run away with him, and that he would gladly give up everything for my sake.

"I was considering what I had better do, when I received a letter from the mother of the girl, saying that if I married Mr. Marilski it would certainly cause her daughter's death, she was so desperately attached to him; and that Stanislas' late behaviour had made her seriously ill. This piece of news decided me. I broke off entirely from him, and my poor mother took me to Dresden for change of air, scene, and people.

"Strange to say, that instead of dreading love, I longed for it. Life seemed to me so stale, dull, and unprofitable, so uninteresting without it. I did everything to forget Stanislas, to drive away his image. I did my best even to think ill of him, to picture him in a ludicrous

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light. I really felt as if my soul had left me, for my body simply vegetated; but I resolved to fight against my misfortune, and not allow this dull oppression to warp my existence. Always fond of art, I resolved to devote myself to painting. I went to the Dresden Gallery, that ideal of a picture gallery, a perfect little temple; where every picture is a gem. It was at the Dresden Gallery that I met my fate number two, in the shape of an artist who was copying the same picture (curious coincidence) that I had begun—'Kinder' von C. L. Vogel.

"My easel was close to his, and from the very first he became most attentive, prepared my pallet, gave me valuable hints about the mixing of colours, how effects were produced—impossible to be kinder. He was a great contrast to Stanislas, but there was something about him which attracted me. I shall repeat to you some of his remarks, and you will judge what sort of man number two was.

"After having looked at several of the *chefs-d'œuvre* in the Gallery, I remarked rather petulantly to him that he was too fond of analyzing the different manners in which the pictures were painted; that he was completely absorbed by the technical process and missed the spiritual idea, the soul, the genius of the conception. A picture to him was a kind of plum-pudding. Why not chiefly admire the thought, and not merely how an effect is produced?

"'You are an *exaltée* enthusiastic young girl,' he said to me after a few hours' talk. 'You must calm yourself. You have a dash of genius, but you require a rudder. I shall be your rudder.'

"Cool, *n'est-ce pas?*" said Olga, looking up at me with an arch smile. He went on:

"'Those high-flown ideas are very youthful. You must not allow your imagination to run away with you.' And, fixing his cold grey eyes upon me: 'I can read your character in your face, for you are very transparent. I can read the inner workings of your mind. You have suffered, young lady; you are disappointed: you are not now in your normal condition. You have been taken out of your small orbit, and you are in a feverish state, and are trying to fling yourself into another sphere. I know the sensation well, for I have been in that condition. I have loved and lost.'

"His impudence took me by storm. 'What right have you to form such a conclusion?' I said to him.

"'Do not be offended with me; I understand your nature, and see it all in your face; do not contradict me, but take my fatherly advice, for I am over forty, and know life. Fly from love; never let a man know how much you care for him. Devote yourself to Art; that will never deceive or disenchant you, and the labour you bestow upon it will be recompensed in this world. You will have hours of real joy over your own creations—that is my experience. I looked for love,

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and while under the fatal spell I felt intoxicated, and like the sunflower basked in sunshine; but I have never met with a being that satisfied my heart and soul; whilst the beauties of Nature and of Art are unfailing resources of happiness.'"

"Do you mean to say, Olga, that this man spoke to you thus, on so short an acquaintance?"

"Yes, exactly," she replied, slightly colouring, and tossing back her wavy hair.

"What is his name, and who is he?"

"His name is Crauford, and he is half Irish, half English; a very clever artist, musician and poet, with just a dash of mystery to make him interesting. We met every day for several months at the Dresden Gallery. I felt myself alive again. Mr. Crauford made it a point to copy the same picture I copied, and the hours spent in his society were hours of happiness. At times he would recite to me ballads of his own composition, weird, strange, grotesque, and full of fancy. His voice was deep, strong, and yet soft. This man puzzled and fascinated me. Outwardly he seemed calm, conceited, vain, obstinate; at other times he was full of tenderness, flavoured with cynicism. He had a dramatic, powerful way of expressing himself, and an utter absence of ideality. We grew confidential, and I told him about Stanislas. I do not know if he was actuated by a feeling of jealousy, or if he really wished to cure me entirely, but he turned the whole affair into ridicule. Fancy Mr. Marilski with a bad cold in his head, red nose, eyes swimming, no pocket-handkerchief, sneezing, &c.; or, in a dozen years, with a big stomach like an alderman, gouty, with a dozen children! No; analyze the feeling, and you will find that love is built on a very slight foundation. You excite an interest; there is some objection in the way, your imagination is at work, and that object becomes a dire necessity as long as you cannot possess him or her; but when you do possess, illusion vanishes, love often flies, and you find yourself tied down for life to a log.' Though Mr. Crauford talked to me thus, he did everything to excite my interest in himself; he spoke to me of his plans, his aspirations, his doubts, fears—and ended by confessing that he loved me.

"Now comes wound number two.

"One evening at an artistic party, where I went with a lady friend, somebody mentioned Mr. Crauford's name, speaking in great praise of his artistic merit and general fascination. Then somebody else remarked, and I still hear the words as if they were words of fire—

"'Yes, poor fellow, what a miserable thing for him, that wife of his being such a confirmed drunkard! and though separated, he cannot marry again. There ought to be a divorce in such cases. Married and not married! What a sad position for a man still in the bloom of his life.'

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"'I never knew that Crauford was a married man,' said a fat elderly gentleman. 'He has dined several times at my house in London, and I have often asked him why he did not enter the blessed state of matrimony; and he simply said he could not, and I thought perhaps it was because his means did not allow him.'

"'He is very well off,' answered speaker number one. 'I met him yesterday, and he told me that he felt restless and unhappy. He is getting on splendidly as an artist, but I hear that he has fallen in love with a pretty girl who is studying Art and copying at the Gallery here.'

"I could stand it no longer. Rushing off to my *chaperone*, I complained of a sick headache; once home, I burst into tears, felt the world again to be a wide desert, and did not return to the Gallery. My mother soon after this died; so that month was indeed a black epoch in my life, and made lovely Dresden a perfect nightmare. A few days after my mother's funeral, when I was trying to pack up my things in order to get away from the now hateful place, and come to Paris, where I had at all events a few friends, I received a long, touching letter from Mr. Crauford, telling me all about his unfortunate marriage, his love and sympathy for me.

"I wrote back to bid him adieu, and telling him that my wish was that we should never meet or correspond any more. This is the end of my love stories, so you see that I have not been lucky in that department."

"Poor little Olga!" I said taking her soft white hand in mine, "you have indeed suffered; but you are still very young, and will be more fortunate another time."

"Oh, no, no more love affairs! *C'est fini.* I have made a firm resolve to work hard to become a great artist, if possible. Adieu to romance, it is a waste of time—

> 'I slept, and dreamt that life was beauty;
> I woke, and found that life was duty.'

We part for the night, both of us vowing and declaring that we should throw ourselves heart and soul into the Art career, and give up all idea of marriage. "Yes," says Olga, "all men are deceivers; false, vain, conceited, jealous, wicked, &c. &c. &c. I shall be a nice, clever, artistic old maid. That is my final decision."

Part II.

Next morning Olga comes into my room, looking so sweet and fresh in the pretty lavender muslin, and passing her arm through mine we go down the staircase together. On our way to the dining-room we meet several boarders, issuing from their respective bedrooms. No need to inquire after the nationality of these beings. Alas! Englishwomen

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cannot be mistaken on the Continent; their want of taste and tact in dress is an unmistakable badge. This thought shot across my brain as I perceive a large family preceding us downstairs; the mother, tremendously stout and beefy-looking, is in ill-fitting many-coloured garments; with such feet! encased in immense boots. She wears two large brooches, evidently family portraits—one pinning a collar, the other doing nothing, just for show. Four pretty daughters follow her closely, guiltless of any attempt at style. Perhaps this want of taste in dress is made more conspicuous by the presence of two young American girls, elegantly attired in the very last new fashion.

"How are you, Mademoiselle Soultikoff?" they both exclaim, in strong nasal accent. "I guess this is the friend you have been expecting all along?" and on receiving from Olga an affirmative nod they shake hands cordially with me. "So glad to see you. Are you come to Paris alone? I reckon that you are one of our sort; you find your family an inconvenience? I told my people," said the elder of the two, "all very well to stay under the maternal and paternal wing when one is a chicken, but once that period over we want our liberty. How well you have fixed your hair, Mademoiselle Soultikoff. That's the style, I guess, that Mr. Morris likes. Now do not blush, no harm having a genius for an admirer, though he ought to fix himself better, cut his hair short; but he is a lovely fellow, and you need not be ashamed of your conquest; he never takes any notice of any one but of you. You are both kindred spirits."

I could not help laughing, but Olga seemed rather annoyed and confused.

At the bottom of the staircase we were greeted by a very fat *bonne* in a very white frilled cap; her round face beams with good nature. She stands at the door of the *salle à manger*, and as I am the last new arrival she indicates my place, which is quite at the end of the long table. Olga is near the top, and sits close to the genius, Mr. Morris.

About fifty people sit on each side of a very long table. At a side-board the fat *bonne*, whose name is Uranie, pours out tea and coffee, with wonderful celerity, serves everybody right and left; she darts from one to another with a quickness of step that is delightful to witness; while serving she has a funny, witty repartee always ready. At my right sits an Irish girl, as I instantly discover by her rich musical brogue. She is pretty; large grey eyes and auburn hair. Her mother sits next to her: they are on their way home from Italy. Opposite to me is a large tribe of Americans. "Well! do they call that breakfast on this side of the pond?" exclaims the man of the party, putting up his eyeglass. "I really see nothing. In our country, madam," addressing the Irish girl, "we have for breakfast stewed beef-steaks, chops, tongue, ham, eggs, potatoes dressed in a dozen different

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ways, oatmeal cakes, pumpkin pie, jams, jellies, creams, and hot bread of different kinds; but here I just spy a few unhappy-looking sardines and some eggs. Call this breakfast? Well, I suppose we must make the best of it, but I pronounce this starvation. In the States we breakfast at seven o'clock, for every man goes to business at eight; but Europe is a slow place, and the French have nothing to do but smoke and go to *cafés*, I guess. I do not wonder that they got so thoroughly licked by the Germans, for, after America, Germany is the next great power, and that is because they feed their inner man. In England we always get the same food; no variety, and everything so greasy."

At the end of a few seconds, what was to be had on the table had found its way on to the American plates. What an odd mixture! eggs chopped up with jam, sardines, butter, all mixed together. "No wonder Brother Sam is so yellow and bilious-looking," whispers the Irish girl.

The two American young ladies are flirting desperately with a fair young Englishman.

"I guess," says the prettier of the two, "that you like better travelling without your mother."

This speech is accompanied by a look that cannot be described. The young man blushes, and says that his mother is old, and naturally prefers the quiet of her country home in England.

A little higher up the table sits the funny man of the boarding-house. His name is Mr. Smiles. He is a fine, tall, good-looking man, with splendid teeth, loud voice, and such a ringing laugh! It shakes the room, and is so infectious that everybody joins in it. He is sitting by the side of a very ugly old lady with a brown wig on one side, and we hear him all over the room saying,

"Now, dear Mrs. Kingsley, you have not done your hair properly this morning; you know that it hurts my feelings to think that you no longer care to appear charming in my eyes. Are you beginning to care less for Theophilus Smiles?" And he puts his hand on his heart, and turns his eyes up in a sentimental comical way, which is diverting.

Mrs. Kingsley titters and seems pleased.

Not far from Olga sits a pretty English girl, with brown eyes and brown hair. This young lady is having a hot altercation with a gentleman opposite, who is evidently more amused than excited. This young lady is a red-hot republican. She is declaring that the only thing worth living for is the republic; that is her chief thought, her first principle. She would give up life readily for that glorious cause. She has come over to Paris on purpose to see Gambetta. She takes in all the American and Spanish papers, so that she may be well *au fait* with passing events in republican countries. She argues that England is republican at heart; that the queen is merely an orna-

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ment, but that the masses are democrats. Of course this speech is a bomb-shell. Miss Hutchinson is called to order.

The Americans scream out nasally that royalty is mere fancy-work, and everything and everybody appertaining to it a mistake, a nuisance. Yes, democracy is making rapid strides. In less than twenty years the republic will be established everywhere.

Miss Hutchinson is so pleased at finding herself thus supported that she gets up from her chair, rushes to the American camp, and they all shake hands. Then Mr. Smiles solemnly rises, stretches out his long fingers, and says "Bless you, my children."

This causes general laughter, and for the present the discussion is at an end.

Mr. Blake is sitting next to a nice ladylike widow, who my pretty neighbour tells me is on the look out for a third husband.

Breakfast is over; the boarders disappear. I join Olga, who is still talking to Mr. Morris. This man is evidently under her spell: his look, his manner, denote that profound admiration which cannot be acted. Mr. Morris advances towards me, and asks me if I will honour his small studio with a visit, and accompany Mdlle. Soultikoff. I gladly consent, and we both follow him upstairs to the top of this very big house.

"It is an honour that he is paying you," whispers Olga. "He has never, with the exception of myself, invited any one to his studio, and nearly all the people entreat him to let them have a peep; but no use. So he is not a favourite in this house; people generally think him conceited. But really he is not so: he is conscious of his power, and is sensitive and refined."

Mounting a queer little back staircase we enter a kind of garret in the roof of the house. What a delightful view! The Seine is twinkling at our feet; steamers are rushing by; we can just see the towers of Notre Dame and the Sainte Chapelle, the quays, and old book stalls, and curiosity shops. The room is hung all round with sketches in oils and water colours. One of the first things that attracts my attention is the picture of a girl in white standing in an autumnal landscape; the tints of the foliage are of a golden brown, at her feet are crisp brown leaves, while she holds some dead leaves in her white hands. There is a listless, lonely look in the face, but the likeness to Olga is striking: the same graceful figure, the same light, untidy, wavy masses of fair hair, the same concentrated thought, and just a tinge of sadness in the large dark grey eyes. Same sweetness in the mouth, but a little more determination in the chin, and slightly knitted eyebrows. The painting of the face is beautiful; there is a tenderness of treatment which is remarkable, and the colouring is full of harmony. The background is a sunset, the clouds are purple and gold.

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"This picture is the only production of mine which gives me any sort of pleasure," says Mr. Morris; "and I shall never part with it." And he gives Olga a tender look, but she does not respond to it, and calls my attention to some of the sketches which are sufficient to shew that Mr. Morris is a man of genius. Some striking landscapes are lying about—a dark pool of water, illuminated by one streak of strong, rippling light, long tall willows, and a stork sleeping and standing on one leg; a sea-piece, grey sky, gloomy shore, a white bird fluttering sadly over the white-crested waves; studies of rocks by moonlight, in deep purple shadows and strong silvery lights. The charm in these various productions is the intense feeling, the pathetic striving after a something beyond—unattainable. They are the productions of a man that has evidently suffered acutely. He has, I suspect, loved deeply and has been disappointed. These are my thoughts as I see on all sides heads full of sadness, wistfulness, and even despair.

"I suppose you do not care to make money by your art?"

"No. In my opinion art is a religion, a creed, a faith. The creation of the beautiful ought to be the highest ambition of an artist. Our notions of the beautiful vary according to our temperament and education. Perfection of form, harmony of colour, depth of expression, is what I strive to render. When I shall be satisfied, then perhaps I shall send to the different exhibitions. One of the Yankees downstairs, who has made his fortune by selling calico, asked me the other day what line of business I pursued; and when I answered 'Art,' he turned up his nose, and exclaimed, 'Bad trade that, sir. I want some large painting for my drawing-room in Fifth Avenue, New York; some big, shiny piece; none of your dead colours; don't care for your old masters, they are precious humbugs—we are getting too much alive in our young country for that sort of work—landscapes and pretty gals. But let me see what you have in the market.' And looked so astonished," continued Mr. Morris, "when I told him that I had nothing that would suit him, and that I preferred not showing him any of my works."

"You are not practical, my good sir; you will die in a garret, like some geniuses; paint to please the rich, as so many of the British artists do. Make money; that means, power. Do not mind if it is not your notion of Art. Fill your pockets, and then paint your grand ideas."

"Yankee is worldly wise, but I call that prostituting art. Alas! it has become a trade, just like upholstery. So many pictures painted to order, each with a name attached. I have just enough to live on, and hope to make the public follow me, and not paint merely to please a nation which has not high notions of art."

"*Vivent* your sentiments!" we both exclaim.

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"And now, before we leave this delightful studio, play something on the piano for my friend," says Olga, opening the instrument.

"You know that I must obey my queen," he answers, bowing; "but as a rule I do not play for any one. The music I enjoy is not popular, for it is generally found incomprehensible by the masses, but I firmly believe that it will be the music of the future. Wagner is my favourite master."

He sits down, and after a few strange, wild preludes, plays portions of that ideal mystical masterpiece, Wagner's 'Lohengrin.' I feel transported into a world of strange fancies, inhabited by mystical visionary beings. It is all vague, striking, original. Then Mr. Morris breaks out and sings softly Elsa's song:

"Euch Lüften, die mein Klagen, &c."

I am roused by Olga, who taps me on the shoulder, and tells me it is time to leave. Mr. Morris makes us promise to return soon again, and we bid him *au revoir*.

"It is curious how much genius, power, and passion are contained in this small room, and how much *ennui*, stupidity, nonsense, shallowness, and gossip, inhabit the remainder of this large house," remarks Olga, as we descend the staircase and enter our room. "Lunch with me in my sitting-room; I find it such a tremendous bore to assist at the general luncheon; one gets so tired of seeing always the same people, hearing the same jokes, and eating the same food."

"Well, Yankee is right," I remark, "when he said that money is power, and gives liberty; if you had not plenty of filthy lucre you could not afford to have your own way, and eat *pâté de foie gras* in your own room instead of joining at the common table and partaking of more homely fare. I like money, though I admire Mr. Morris's views—he is so full of imagination, that he must be quite happy."

"No," answers Olga, "Mr. Morris is not really a happy man. Of course he must have moments of intense gratification, but his ideal of beauty is so elevated that he is miserable when he cannot attain it."

"There is no doubt, Olga, that Mr. Morris is in love with you: his manner, his look show that you occupy his thoughts, and that beautiful picture is an expression of his feelings."

"Yes, I think Mr. Morris admires me very much. Why should he not do so? I am pretty, artistic, and with all my faults, I am attractive; but his nature is rather like mine, so I simply feel sympathy and admire his lofty views; but I have not a bit of love for him; my heart does not beat any quicker, my pulse is just the same when he approaches me. I think quite calmly of him, and would not be at all jealous if he fell in love with any other girl. He is very odd; his mother was a German, and I fancy that she was rather queer—in fact,

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I imagine that she was slightly insane; he has inherited from her unhealthy, odd notions. He has often told me that he would rather not marry a woman he was in love with; love is such a *wunderschön* feeling that he would like to feel eternally the pleasure and pain it occasions, and to enjoy the torture of not possessing what he longs for. It is a curious idea, but I daresay he is right; marriage must, in a way, destroy the poetry of love. A sincere attachment and quiet happiness follows, but many illusions vanish. He told me, that as a young fellow, he fell in love with a beautiful Polish girl, who sang and danced like an angel, and whose face was a vision of beauty—well, she loved him; they met often at a country-house in the wilds of Silesia, she promised to marry him. Strange, the idea frightened and disenchanted him so much that, for fear his love should vanish, he went away engaged to her. In his absence, she caught a fearful cold, and three weeks after his departure she was lying in her grave. He was travelling about, and did not know of her death till he returned. His grief was intense, and still he confesses that to him there is a melancholy pleasure in the idea that she died loving him entirely, without having belonged to him. He is an eccentric creature, and as he has frankly spoken to me about his odd notions, he cannot expect me to wish to marry him. He is a poet, an artist, and a musician, utterly unfitted for the prose of married life."

Dinner at the Boarding-House.

What a clamour, clatter, and babel of tongues! The nasal twang of America, the rich brogue of Ireland, some musical English voices—all talking and laughing at once, so loudly.

Miss Magee is laughing musically, and making fun of Mr. Smiles, who had been flirting vigorously in the vaults underneath the Pantheon, and had proposed to a wrong lady in the dark.

Mr. Blake sits this evening at my right hand, and Mrs. Merriman, the widow, at Mr. Blake's left.

A deaf elderly gentleman sits opposite to me, and is talking out loud to himself. I hear him muttering, "Why will that silly old woman, Mrs. Kingsley, wear a brown wig instead of her own white hair, and why will she bob her foolish head up and down, while that idiot Smiles makes an ass of himself? If that fellow could only see himself as others see him he would stop. I hate to see a man grimacing, gesticulating, and behaving altogether like his ancestors, the monkeys." I laugh; but the uproar at dinner is so great that nobody listens to anybody else.

"I like that old boy," remarks Mr. Blake. "I often go and smoke in his room. Old Douglas is a chip of the old block; he is a great reader, a traveller; but he is as cynical as Diogenes, and generally rude

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to his equals; but he is fond of animals, children; but, curiously enough, despises women."

"I suppose Mr. Douglas has had a disappointment in his youth, poor man! I am sorry for him," lisps Mrs. Merriman with a gentle sigh.

"The devil take her," mutters out loud Mr. Douglas, "There! she has just carried off my favourite bit of chicken, just the slice I have had my eye upon. What a greedy woman she is, to be sure!"

This ebullition of deaf Mr. Douglas, is intended for Mrs. Melligrew, a fat, ruddy-faced Englishwoman, in military mourning, scarlet and black, who is just depositing upon her plate the wing of a chicken, some stuffing, &c., unconscious of Mr. Douglas's remarks.

The dinner is over, and we all go up to the drawing-room. Olga, Mrs. Blake, and I, go and sit in the balcony, and from that observatory watch the different boarders. Mr. Morris disappears to his den. All the old ladies sit together at one end of the room. The girls cluster round Mr. Smiles and a Mr. Chambers, a mild disciple of Mr. Smiles, who laughs at all his jokes, and is his shadow. Mr. Smiles is now in his element, he stalks off to the piano, and with great *entrain* sings the famous couplet in 'La fille de Madame Angot:'

Très-jolie,
Peu polie,
Possédant un gros magot."

All the young ladies join in this chorus, even Olga and Mr. Blake chime in from the balcony. Mr. Smiles sings this very comically, and with all the appropriate gestures of *les dames de la halle.*

"Do you see that nice-looking old lady sitting there?" says Olga, pointing out an old lady with soft brown eyes and white hair, "that is Miss Peleg. If anybody feels at all poorly—it does not matter about the symptoms, those are of no consequence—we go to Miss Peleg, and she gives everybody the same medicine: two teaspoonfuls of Birch's Salts. A cold in the head, indigestion, neuralgia, rheumatism, etc., etc., treated in the same way; for Miss Peleg believes implicitly in this unfailing remedy; and when any of the boarders feel queer they go up to Miss Peleg to be *Birched;* and if anybody dies, it is because they have not taken those wonderful salts in time. Since I am at Madame Dupont's, I have had Birch's Salts, at least forty times, and I live!"

Mr. Blake is now called upon to play. He is very obliging—does not make a fuss. He plays the "Coulin," that grand, pathetic, old Irish air, and he plays it so exquisitely that he is made to play it a second, and even a third time. He then accompanies Miss Magee, who sings 'Kate Kearney,' 'My Love is like a red, red Rose,' and 'The Wearing of the Green.' Olga and I remark that Mrs. Merri-

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man's smile is no longer childlike and bland, as she watches the pretty Irish girl sing those wild pathetic airs as only an Irish girl can sing them. Perhaps the widow feels a little jealous as she perceives the admiration that Mr. Blake evidently has for this charming Hibernian, with her sunny smile, her ringing laugh, and musical brogue.

"I am sure that Mr. Blake is a little bit in love with Miss Magee," whispers Olga to me on the balcony; "and I fancy that the widow does not like it. I should like Mr. Blake to marry Mary Magee; they would be so well suited. They are both musical, very Irish, and she is such a bright, unaffected girl. Now Mrs. Merriman is a kind of female Blue Beard—a wolf in sheep's clothing. I should not like her to kill Mr. Blake, for he is a nice little fellow."

"You and Miss Magee are hard upon this unfortunate widow. I think her rather attractive: she has a low, sweet voice; her manners are good. I confess that this eternal sweet smile provokes me."

"Now let us retire to our bedroom," says Olga. "We have had a good dose of gossip and scandal, let us go before we either of us have said something that we shall regret profoundly the next morning. I do envy those quiet people, who never do, say, or write an impulsive thing; who never get into scrapes. They may be a little dull, perhaps, but how safe they are—how respectable!

Olga and I now go regularly to Madame Latour's studio. An old man with a long white beard, furrowed face, attired in the costume of a monk, is our model. I feel that I make great strides in art, Madame Latour is such a good teacher. She comes into our studio once a-day for about an hour; but her advice is so good, her corrections so conscientious, that the progress we make is remarkable. My study of the monk is the second best; Olga's is the best. She signs those two works, as a proof of her approbation. Madame Latour allows us now and then to come into her studio and watch her process of working. She is painting a Bacchante: the head thrown back, vine leaves encircling the red-brown hair, and eyes full of voluptuousness and fire; the throat and neck are beautifully modelled, and over the bosom is a gorgeous leopard skin. One hand presses a bunch of grapes, the other hangs listlessly at her side.

At four o'clock the pupils leave the studio. Olga and I usually saunter through the streets of Paris, look into the shops, and often drop into some of the beautiful old Roman Catholic churches. The quiet, the subdued light pouring in through the coloured windows, the paintings, the incense, the solemn peals of the organ, the fresh voices of *les enfans du chœur* in their white and coloured garments, the harmony of the architecture, is an attraction to the artistic temperament.

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One afternoon we had a sort of religious discussion. I said that I found the so-called Low Church cold, unsympathetic, and even very dull; and going to pray at stated hours and days formal and unnatural. Now, in Catholic communities the churches are always opened; and when you need prayer, and would desire repose it is a comfort to drop into one of those old churches; and even if no service is going on, it is soothing to listen to the silence, to be in an atmosphere of subdued light. There is more poetry in the Roman Catholic faith, with all its grievous errors.

"I am a pagan," says Olga. "Nature is my god; the sun, the stars, and the yellow moon are my deities. On Sundays I generally take long rambles in the country with Fido, my dog, and my little maid Nina. Sometimes, when the spirit moves me, which is seldom, I go to hear the celebrated *pasteur*, Monsieur Bonchemin, *le pasteur à la mode*. All the ladies run after him, and that is one of the reasons I go so seldom to his chapel, for it makes me ill to see how women turn the heads of those servants of God! Monsieur Bonchemin is a man of great eloquence. His sermons are great intellectual treats: he never reads his sermons, and that is such an advantage! His utterance is delightful, voice beautiful; he never hesitates for a word. He is very handsome, like a St. John, with a slightly melancholy *rêveur* expression, which is fascinating. His hands are beautiful, and he knows it, for one of these appendages he lets hang gracefully down the pulpit cushion. He is the woman's *pasteur*—a kind of Protestant Pope: his power is great, his appeals to the conscience are searching and keen, and he certainly makes me feel horribly uncomfortable; but when I see all those elegant toilettes, those wonderful Paris bonnets, I do not feel at all as if I was worshipping an unseen God—merely listening to a handsome, eloquent preacher. So I prefer Nature: I feel more elevated looking at a fine sunset, or at the sea, than kneeling upon a hard footstool, surrounded by silks, satins, and prosperity. *Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas!* Do you know Mr. Morris is a Positivist, a follower of Comte? He worships humanity. He tells me he does his duty, and tries to love his neighbour. As far as I know, his notion of duty is to paint pictures, and I do not think he cares for his neighbours. He is often much depressed; and really I do not wonder at it, for it is hard to have little in this world, and to think he will have nothing at all in the next."

At this point of the conversation, who should we see but Mr. Morris, in an old battered wide-awake, a very shabby coat, and a portfolio under his arm. Olga taps him on the back with her parasol He starts, and looks uncomfortable. We tell him that we were just talking about him, and saying that it was a pity he did not believe in a future state.

"The boulevards are scarcely a fit place for a discussion upon the

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immortality of the soul," answers Mr. Morris smiling; "but if you are anxious to know my belief, all I can say is, that my mind is not made up. I feel that I have a soul, and do not think it will perish."

"Let us leave the soul alone," exclaims Olga, looking into a cake shop. "I shall perish if I do not eat. Let us enter this *pâtisserie*, and fill our inner beings!"

Mr. Morris tries to escape. He declares that he is not in a fit state to be seen walking in ladies' society; he has been sketching all day at the Jardin des Plantes.

"You know, Mr. Morris, that I am also a Bohemian, and do not mind how shabby you look."

We insist so much that he consents to remain with us, and so we enter the shop, devour a number of creams *éclairs*, and Olga orders a parcel of cakes, biscuits, and *bonbons* to be made up for a small *protégé* of hers, a cripple boy, whom she is going to visit the following day.

We walk through the Tuileries Gardens. How imposing the ruins of this once mighty palace look in this twilight! There is something very grand about the old Château now, as it stands there mutilated. What pages of history have been enacted there!—a whole past swept away! The Gardens are at this hour deserted. The statues seem quite mournful, and look like ghosts in this dim grey light. A solitary white swan is gliding warily in a dismal pond; the trees make a dark background; the clouds are purple; there is a thin mist over everything, and just over the ruined helpless palace peeps a young crescent moon. The sentinel looks like an uneasy spirit, as he stands at the gate of the Garden.

We cross the bridge, down the Quai Voltaire, and peep leisurely into all the bric-a-brac shops, and lastly we enter an old curiosity shop, full of quaint odd pieces of furniture, old china, old plate, &c. It is a queer little den. The shopman is a Jew, named Solomon—a thin, wiry old fellow, with a few scanty white hairs brushed carefully over his narrow head, spectacles falling down his long thin nose. In his wrinkled hand he holds a lamp, which casts mysterious shadows here and there in the small shop. "A picture for Rembrandt," I thought, as I watch the old Jew ferreting out his antique wares, beautiful bronzes, laces, old books, prints, &c.

"What a splendid bit of old tapestry! It would look well in my little studio," exclaims Mr. Morris, "but I must not be tempted to buy it."

Olga goes up to the shopman, whispers something mysteriously, and the piece of tapestry is folded up and presented to Mr. Morris. "A souvenir from me," says Olga to him, "in remembrance of this charming walk."

Mr. Morris changes colour, looks bewildered, refuses, but Olga insists, so he naturally ends by gratefully accepting it.

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I am presented with a pair of antique gold earrings, which in the innocence of my heart I had admired.

"You see what it is to go out with this Lady Bountiful; one dare not express a wish," says Mr. Morris.

"The pleasure is greater in giving than in receiving, so say nothing more about it."

We meet Uranie at the door of the *pension*, who tells me, to my great amazement, that my cousin, Mr. Horace Dashwood, "a varie prettie boy," is upstairs, waiting to see me.

"How very absurd!" Olga and I both exclaim, and before we can make any further remark my cousin stands before us.

"Glad to see you both," Horace shouts, shaking hands with us heartily; "what wild Bohemians you are to be sure!—meandering about Paris, not coming in to dinner, and not telling anybody where you go."

"I am the culprit," says Mr. Morris, "I really thought it a pity to go indoors such a lovely evening, so I begged the young ladies to dine at a restaurant."

Mr. Morris looks much confused, bids us good night, and Horace follows us upstairs.

"Who on earth is that fellow? in such a shabby old coat and battered wide-awake? An artist, of course. I cannot understand how two fashionably dressed girls could walk out with a man in such a beggarly costume. You consider him a genius, innocent young creatures, simply because he looks dirty."

"Now, Mr. Dashwood, I will not allow you to call Mr. Morris dirty; he is a great artist, and no doubt a man of genius too. You think, evidently, that the coat makes the man. Some men do depend entirely upon their tailor for success in the world; Mr. Morris is above such a consideration. He has a soul above buttons."

"Well, I wish he had some more buttons to his coat. I am sorry, Mademoiselle Olga, if I have hurt your feelings. All I can say is, that if artists are all like Mr. Morris then I would rather not know any. But let us drop this very unpleasant topic. You look very cross, Mademoiselle Olga."

Olga pouts, and disappears from the room.

"I suppose I have annoyed her. Is she engaged to that wild Bohemian in the old wide-awake?"

"No, she is not; but he is a very great admirer of hers—in fact, I am sure the man is in love with her. So you ought to be more careful, and not give vent to all your notions about artists. Mr. Morris will one day make his mark in the world."

Horace gives a long contemptuous whistle: "I do not pretend to understand artists; they are a race apart."

After a little talk about family affairs Olga returns. To my amuse-

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ment she has changed her dress, and put on a most becoming lilac silk dress, and placed a coquettish lilac ribbon in her wavy hair. I, of course, make no outward and visible sign of my astonishment; but evidently this inconsistent little maiden is a flirt, and, consequently, bent upon making a conquest of my cousin, the famous woman-hater!

"Won't you and Mr. Horace come into my parlour and have some supper?—but you must not abuse Mr. Morris, or we shall quarrel dreadfully."

An exquisite little supper is laid out on the table. A couple of lamps shed a soft light. The water is hissing in the urn. Comfort, luxury, and artistic objects make this room a little Paradise. The windows are open, and in the balcony stand masses of roses, heliotropes, and lilies of the valley.

"What a lovely room!" exclaims Horace. "Paris taste, good English comfort: what more can a mortal require?"

"Yes, Mr. Dashwood, though I am an artist and a Bohemian, I do like pretty things, and no end of luxury. I hope that you admire my dress? it is made by a very fashionable dressmaker." And she makes him a profound courtesy.

"I have been admiring you; such a toilette could only come out of the hands of a Parisian dressmaker, and those dear little shoes that I spy are works of art."

Olga takes off her slipper, and hands it to Horace for nearer inspection. It is very small, of lilac satin, embroidered with silver braid.

"Cinderella's slipper; and you, Horace, are the Prince," I remark.

"Oh no, Mr. Dashwood is not gallant enough for that; his chief failing is not to admire us poor women, alas! But I think we can do without his admiration. Have some sparkling moselle or champagne, or both, and eat some of the *pâté de lièvre*, Mr. Horace, and tell me what you have been doing with your great self since I had the pleasure of seeing you, more than a year ago."

"Well, I have been doing what most of us Englishmen spend the greater part of our lives in doing, that is, killing beasts, birds, and fishes, viz., hunting, shooting, and fishing. You foreigners can hardly understand or appreciate this mode of life, but it makes us the manly race we are, the first nation in the world. Hurrah!"

"Well, I do think," answers Olga, "that hunting and shooting is very cruel sport: to see a number of big, burly men, spending their energies running after a poor fox, or a little hare, it seems wicked; and as for deer-stalking, I simply think it is a crime. I cannot understand how any man can wound a beautiful deer, with its splendid horns and lovely, piteous eyes, looking so pleading; no, I think it cowardly. I do not think fishing so bad," says Olga. "It is rather nice sport; one sits in a boat, with a pretty landscape all about, for the scenery is generally lovely, the water delicious, and one has merely to

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wait for the fish; and when it is caught the poor thing does not seem to dislike it so very much, he does not scream or bleed. No, fishing is rather a poetical pastime."

Horace laughs heartily. "You know little about fishing if you imagine that one has merely to wait quietly for the fish to be hooked; but it is no use my trying to initiate you into the mysteries of fishing in your drawing-room. When you come over to England we shall have some fishing together, I hope."

"Oh that will be so jolly! I shall be mad with delight if I can just fish up a salmon." And Olga claps her hands at the mere anticipation of such a triumph.

"We shall not begin by salmon-fishing, I assure you; but I must retire, Mademoiselle Olga. I have much enjoyed my evening here. We shall meet to-morrow at breakfast, for I am staying in this house. So *bon soir*.

The next morning, at breakfast, Horace sits between Olga and me, to the evident disgust of poor Mr. Morris, who watches us gloomily from his side of the table. Mr. Blake is sitting near Mary Magee, in close confabulation, to the dismay of the widow. Mr. Smiles is between the two young American girls, flirting cleverly with the two. Miss Hutchinson is smiling radiantly upon a red-hot Radical. We can overhear a little of their conversation.

"Why should not women be in Parliament? they are more eloquent, more tenacious than men."

"Did you ever hear such rubbish?" says Horace. "If that fellow goes on talking such arrant bosh I shall surely have an indigestion. I hate Radicals; they never look gentlemanly. Now look at this man, his coat does not fit him properly, his nails are black. Now a Conservative always looks a gentleman."

Immediately after breakfast we all three decide upon going to Asnières to see Olga's little *protégé*, the cripple boy.

Our Visit to the Little Cripple Boy.

It is a glorious morning. We got out of the train at Asnières. The river looks so tempting, that we get into a little boat and Horace rows us. We take off our gloves, dip our fingers in the water, while Horace sings, in a strong, lusty voice:

"Do you ken John Peel with his coat so gay?
Do you ken John Peel at the break of day?
Do you ken John Peel when he's far far away,
With his hounds and his horn in the morning?

Chorus. "For the sound of his horn brought me from my bed,
And the cry of his hounds which he oft-times led,
Peel's view halloo, would awaken the dead,
Or the fox from his lair in the morning."

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Horace decidedly looks to great advantage in the boat. He is attired in a well-made suit of light grey cloth; his bright, deep blue eyes are full of fun and honesty; his chest is broad and well-developed; he is the best type of the "muscular Christianity" school. We get out of the boat and walk across a field full of wild flowers. We all pick some daisies and buttercups to give to poor little Victor.

"I am afraid that he is not long for this world," says Olga. "I fear he is slowly pining away. His mother died during the siege of Paris, literally of starvation, for she could not swallow either horse-flesh, rats, or cats; so little Victor is living with his old *grand'mère*. The little boy is a cripple, and in a consumption; but his father, a most intelligent, honest workman, will not believe that his child is seriously ill. There is the house, that little white place amongst the trees; it is a kind of modest inn, where one can have fish, or rather *friture*, bread and butter, and cheap wine.

"All right," shouts Horace; "I am hungry. I shall order all the fish in the house to be fried; besides, it will put some money into those poor people's pockets."

The old *grand'mère* is standing at the door of the small inn; a fine type of old age. Her hair is snowy white, a coloured *fichu* is pinned across her broad chest; by her side totters a pale, thin, emaciated little boy, so transparent looking, that one could almost fancy a strong breath of wind would waft him away, holding to his *grand'-mère's* skirts. On seeing Olga a bright, sunny smile illuminates his wan, white face.

"He has been inquiring after you, mademoiselle," says the *grand'-mère*, "*n'est-ce pas*, Victor? You are glad to see Mademoiselle Olga?"

The child creeps to her, and Olga gives him some toys, cakes, and *bonbons*.

Horace takes him on his knees, and gives him a box of soldiers; the child at first seems a little frightened, but my cousin soon makes friends with him, and they chatter quite gaily together. *La mère* Gigun looks sadly at her delicate grandchild, and tells us with a big sigh that he is getting weaker and weaker.

"What a lovely face he has!—such long, soft, brown, curly hair, large hazel eyes, with such a wistful expression in them. How I should like to have a good picture of him!" mutters *mère* Gigun, "for no photograph can do justice to him."

"That is an idea! Let us come and paint him," says Olga.

"I will do his portrait and give it to you and his father; but you must allow my friend, Miss Larcom, to paint you and the child also. She wants a *sujet* for a picture."

"Only too happy to think that my old face can be of use. I am quite at your *disposition*, mademoiselle."

I thank the old woman. We arrange to come the following day

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with our easels, canvases, and paint-boxes. Before leaving we order some fried *gougons* for our lunch. Horace compliments the old woman upon her cookery, and insists upon her accepting a twenty franc piece, in order that she may get a few delicacies for the child. Before leaving, Olga takes Victor upon her knee and tells him a story. That is his greatest treat; for he is an imaginative child, and likes to hear about fairies, imps, elves, &c. Victor exists in a kind of Wonderland, and firmly believes that he is always surrounded by fairies. His *grand'mère* tells us that he often says he will be glad to go and live among the fairies: that is his notion of death; a change from what he is now to a beautiful being who lives among flowers, feeds upon honey and fruits, has wings, and visits the stars.

Upon returning to the boarding-house that evening we find our invitations from Madame Latour; it is for the promised fancy ball to take place that day fortnight.

No one can make up their minds as to who or what he or she will personate.

Olga first thinks of going as a star, next as a dryad, or as a sea nymph.

"Do go as an Ophelia," suggests Mr. Morris.

"Oh, I should have to look melancholy all the evening! A lively Ophelia would be so absurd."

"You would be an ideal Ophelia," continues Mr. Morris. "You have just the right hair, the eyes, the figure, and the expression."

"The crazy look in the eyes," barks out Horace. "Do take my advice, Mademoiselle Olga, and go in a costume that suits your general mood and disposition."

"Happy thought!" exclaims Olga. "I shall go as a *diavolina*—an imp from the regions downstairs."

"That's right. Hurrah!" shouts Horace; "and I shall attend the ball as his infernal majesty himself, with a long tail, horns, and a pitchfork."

"*Convenus*," laughs Olga.

Mr. Morris looks pale and very cross, and scowls furiously at my cousin, who screams out:

"Louisa, you might as well dress as an Ophelia; only your fat, red cheeks and tendency to *embonpoint* might be a little incongruous."

"You are very rude! I mean to go as a *vivandière des zouaves*. In a blue vest, scarlet knickerbockers, white waistcoat, a gold *képi* on my head, and a little barrel filled with cognac at my side."

"Delightful idea. We shall all have a drop now and then to revive our drooping spirits."

"Now, Mr. Morris, how will you dress? I particularly wish you to look to advantage," says Olga, going up to him. Let me think what would suit your character as an artist, a poet, a philosopher."

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(Olga darts a saucy look at Horace, who is studying pertinaciously the pattern of the carpet.) "I have it. You must go as Hamlet in the 'Inky cloak.' I order you, Mr. Morris. Now, will you? won't you obey me?"

"I should have gladly gone as Hamlet if you had consented to be Ophelia," whispers Mr. Morris.

"Oh, that would have been too remarkable! Besides which, I should very likely be in wild spirits, and that would not do for Ophelia. No, go as Hamlet, and I shall dance the first dance with you."

Mr. Morris promises, and bidding us good-night, disappears to his den upstairs.

"I do not like that man," growls out my cousin, the moment the door closes upon Mr. Morris; "he is so unhealthy in all his views and notions of life. That artist nature seems unnatural to me. It would do Mr. Morris a vast deal of good to hunt, shoot, and fish. It would make him manly; his notions of everything are sickly, false, and absurd."

"Well, Mr. Dashwood, I am surprised at your disobedience!" exclaims Olga, standing up and flushing with excitement. "I did tell you several times that nothing can annoy me more than to hear Mr. Morris abused Your idea of life is sport and getting into Parliament. All right. Mr. Morris loves art; he is a great artist and musician. He might dress better, but it is not affectation on his part; simply he does not care about the cut of his coat nor about the particular shade of his necktie, &c. Mr. Morris will, I am sure, be a great man one of these days. Meanwhile, let him alone, or we shall quarrel seriously. You are a naughty boy; the more you abuse Mr. Morris the more I shall like him."

"Well, I shall not mention Mr. Morris's name again."

When Horace is gone, I ask Olga if she thinks that my cousin is improved.

"I have not thought much about him, one way or the other." ('What a story!' I inwardly ejaculate.) "He has good qualities, but he is fearfully prejudiced. He is a type of the modern young Englishman; no feeling for Art, but fond of sport. He is generous and manly."

"I wonder if he will ever fall in love?"—saying this I peep slyly at Olga through the corners of my eyes.

She colours up. "I do not think that it is in him to care much for any one."

"Well, I think you are mistaken, and I sometimes think that he does actually care for some young lady."

"Really? Oh! do tell me all about it: he is your cousin, so it is natural that I should take some interest in him."

"Ask no questions and I shall tell you no stories. I cannot say

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anything for certain, it is a supposition on my part. I should like Horace to marry; he will make a first-rate husband."

"Have you seen the girl you think he is in love with?"

"I have seen her, she is a great friend of mine." And I look hard at Olga, who pretends not to understand, gets very red, rushes off to the piano and plays deliciously a valse of Chopin.

The next morning Olga and I go to Asnières. We have our easels, canvases and painting materials. When we reach the quiet inn, we perceive *mère* Gigun at the door, looking very dismal; the child is sleeping.

"I am afraid that before next month he will be lying by his poor mother's grave, in the little *cimetière* over there; he is ebbing away."

We both go up to the bedroom. In a small white bed lies the child, a feverish spot on each cheek: he opens his big eyes and smiles a welcome.

"We are come to paint your picture," Olga says, kissing him; "Here are some flowers for you."

Victor brightens up, he is propped by pillows. The old *grand'-mère* sits close to him, the window is open, and an acacia tree in full bloom casts a delicious fragrance; a cage with two canaries stands on the sill.

I sketch the room as it is; the sick child sitting up playing with the flowers, the *grand'mère*, with her wrinkled face and sweet, sad grey eyes and snowy hair, making such a contrast to the spiritual, unearthly face of the wee grandson. The old woman knits a brown woollen stocking, and a tear now and then drops on her hands as she looks at the child.

Olga, while painting, tells Victor a story of a little boy who was carried away by the fairies, and is still living with them in a beautiful blue palace up in the clouds; he is the only little boy there, the fairies are very fond of him, pet him much, so he is quite happy.

Victor's expression gets more and more ideal, and Olga's portrait is growing wonderfully like.

"What a treasure it will be to us!" exclaims the old woman. "We shall prize it, oh so much, mademoiselle!"

"Why do you look so *triste, grand'mère?* Suppose the fairies take me away up in their blue palace, you, papa, and mademoiselle must come also."

A tap at the door; a fine stalwart *ouvrier* in a blue blouse comes in; his face is sunburnt, but very handsome. He bows respectfully to us, hopes that he does not disturb us, and going up to Victor kisses him. "How are you, *mon fils?*"

"Better, *petit père*. Look at the pictures the ladies are painting of me."

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"With your permission, mademoiselle," and he looks at Olga's work. "It is a very good likeness; the expression is perhaps a little more sad, *mais c'est bien lui!* The eyes are perfect, just the colour and the expression."

Then he comes round to look at mine.

"Ah, that will make a capital picture, old age and childhood. I compliment you upon your artistic talent."

"Is he not a type of the best kind of French workman? so intelligent, refined, and so artistic?" whispers Olga to me. "Well, how are you getting on, Monsieur Lenoir?" she continues, addressing the *ouvrier*.

"Pretty well, mademoiselle, the *commerce* is just beginning to get on, and we must work hard—for during the late sad war and the terrible siege, our hard-earned savings were all spent. If the Republic can last; but, *hélas*, in our unfortunate country, no government is stable, and the happiness of the country at large is sacrificed to the heartless ambition of a few. But I shall retire, mesdemoiselles, for once I begin talking about politics I forget the place and hour." So saying, he kisses the *grand'mère* and Victor, and retires.

"I do admire the French workman so much!" says Olga. "Lenoir is not an exception; no, as a rule, the *ouvriers* are honest, intelligent, and refined; such a contrast, so superior to those horrid little men one meets on the boulevards, sipping *café*, absinthe, and *eau de vie*. I wish those *petits crevés* had all been killed during the late war; they are regular pests, and ought to be exterminated. I assure you that I would gladly shoot them all."

But it is now getting too dark to work, so, kissing Victor, we go downstairs and have a quiet little dinner in the garden.

What will that honest workman do to console the *grand'mère* when Victor is taken away from her? Why must that small treasure be carried off by that grim reality, Death? The landscape is in unison with our thoughts; the sun is setting, the birds are going to roost, the river flows on mournfully, a few fishermen are plying their nets, an owl is giving vent to his single melancholy note, a bat flies round and round. "A sure omen of death!" remarks Olga, with a shudder, as we hurry on to the *chemin de fer* which is to take us back to Paris.

The next day Horace accompanies us to Asnières, his pockets full of toys, pictures, and *bonbons*.

"I asked Mr. Morris to join us, but he refused. He cannot bear to see suffering; he shrinks from pain," says Olga. "Certainly that trait in his character has astonished and disappointed me."

When we reach the sick room we find the father and the *grand'mère* kneeling by the bedside. A *sœur de charité*, in her big flapping cap, is giving the child some syrup in a spoon, to alleviate his cough.

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Victor has just enough strength to clap his thin, transparent hands at our approach. Lenoir, who looks very sad to-day, begs us to go on with our pictures, and whisper to Olga that the portrait will be a great consolation.

It is a sad scene—the father with his honest face bent down in sorrow. The old woman kneeling by the bed. The *sœur* tripping noiselessly about the room.

"I shall see *maman* in Fairyland, won't I, mademoiselle?"

"Yes," answers Olga; "you will meet your mother there. She will be so glad to see you! and we shall all join you there, perhaps, very soon."

"And till you all come I shall look at you from the windows of my blue palace up there in the clouds, and perhaps the fairies will allow me to send you flowers and fruit, and I shall go and see who lives in the stars. But I am so tired, and am going to sleep."

We leave, for evidently Victor is ebbing away. We return home, feeling much subdued; even Horace looks pale, and is very quiet.

When we return the following day, we hear that Victor had been beckoned away that night. We go up to the little room. The child is lovely in death; there is a sweet expression in his face, as if he really saw the Wonderful Land; "there are flowers all about him." The father begs us to make a sketch of the dead child. We comply; it is a very painful work. Olga makes a charming sketch; the likeness is striking, and just over the bed she draws a little angel smiling down upon the dead child. The father and *grand'mère* press gratefully our hands, and we leave the sad house, promising to return in a couple of days for the funeral.

It is a delicious morning in June; a morning balmy and full of life; birds are singing merrily, insects are humming, bees are sucking honey, as little Victor's coffin, covered with a white pall, laden with flowers, carried by two *croque-morts*, makes its way through the fields to the pretty *cimetière*. Olga, Horace, and I follow the mournful *cortége*. The venerable *grand'mère* totters in the rear, supported by the good *sœur*. Several groups of people are dotted about in the fields and meadows; every man raises his hat, and every woman makes the sign of the cross as the tiny funeral passes by.

The coffin is laid by the side of the mother's under an old cypress tree. It is a pretty shady nook: flowers grow round it, and ivy creeps lovingly round the white marble cross. When it is all over I go back to the house, and Olga and Horace remain behind talking to the poor father.

La mere Gigun is much more composed and quiet than I could have imagined it possible. "*Pauvre petit!*" she exclaims, "his last words were, 'I go to the fairies! *Maman* is smiling and stretching out her hands to me. Tell Mademoiselle Olga that I am going'—and he

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was gone without any apparent pain. And I, who am long past seventy, survive him! It is strange! *Enfin* Victor is now with his mother, well cared for, no doubt." The old woman falls asleep. The room is getting very dark, there is an awful stillness. I fancy that I see the child's big eyes looking at me. I cannot stand it any more, so I put up my painting materials. The *sœur* comes in, throws a warm shawl over the old woman—she will spend the night with her—and I depart. At the door I meet Olga and Horace, still talking to the *ouvrier*.

We all shake hands with the poor fellow. "Poor man!" sighs Horace; "he bears his cross courageously. He is going to work harder than ever, in order not to allow himself to dwell too much upon his sore affliction. I am going to ask him to do me a lot of carving for my London house."

Horace and Olga.

A few evenings after this sad episode Horace comes into my room, looking rather meek, and, indeed, sheepish.

"I know," he says, "that you are going to laugh at me. Can you guess what I have done?" and he stares uncomfortably out of the window.

"Well, I think I can guess," I reply laughing.

"Oh yes! you can laugh. Go on. Well, what is it?"

"Why you silly old boy, you have of course fallen head over ears in love with that little sprite, Olga, though she is a Bohemian, a Radical, an artist, independent; in fact, the very contrary of what you pretend to admire."

"Well, you have found me out!" and he colours up very much; "but the wonder of wonders is, that she cares a little for me also, and has consented to become my wife!"

"Nothing surprises me, she is such an inconsistent little damsel. She declared to me not many weeks ago that she would never marry; but I am so glad that she has so soon changed her mind. You are to be congratulated, for she is a charming girl, though she is fond of art, and a Radical."

"It was at the funeral of poor little Victor that I decided upon proposing to her. A look she gave me, a general something in her demeanour that morning, made me feel that I was not indifferent to her; and Olga tells me that my kindness to the child made her care for me against her will."

So the poor little fellow was the unconscious means of making up a match.

I rush off to Olga's room. I find her lying full length upon the hearth-rug; her cheeks are very flushed and her eyes sparkling.

On seeing me she throws a handkerchief over her face, saying,

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"What will you think of me, Louise? I am really ashamed, and cry peccavi; but I really feel so happy. I did not think it possible for me ever to care for any one again, and I now find that I never really loved either number one or number two. I have told your cousin all about those previous affairs; he is such a good fellow, he does not mind at all. Don't laugh at me too much, I am sure you must think me a very odd girl."

"Indeed I do; that is your charm—so unlike everybody else. But I congratulate you, you and Horace will be very happy together."

"I shall leave the boarding-house as soon as I have packed up all my pretty things, and have them all sent to London."

"You will come and stay at our house till the wedding?"

"Just what I should like. I have no home, no relatives, no one in the world. Horace will now be everything to me."

"Well, nothing will astonish me now, not even if he tries to get you into Parliament."

Conclusion.

The fancy ball at Madame Latour's studio is a great success. It is a picnic ball: the ladies send the eatables, the men the wines. Olga and I sent a tremendous *pâté de foie gras* and a boar's head.

The *atelier* looks quite grand, brilliantly illuminated and festooned with flowers and evergreens, and a long table laden with all the delicacies of the season. Olga is the belle of the ball, as a *diavolina* in scarlet, gold, and black skirts; little gold horns in her hair, a pitch-fork in her hand, and black and red flames worked into the patterns of her dress.

Horace changed his mind, and disguised himself as a wolf. His tail was constantly trodden upon, and then he would roar lustily, to the great amusement of everybody. He and Olga were in high spirits. Naturally, poor Mr. Morris, having heard of their engagement (such secrets always get known), did not appear at the ball: a sure sign that he really cared for Olga.

Mr. Blake is disguised as an orange-tree, Miss Magee as a shepherdess. It is noticed by many that she rests continually under that particular tree, and that the tree hovers constantly over her.

My costume of *vivandière* is a great success. One particular gentleman, whose name I shall not divulge, drank more cognac out of my barrel than was good for him.

Madame Latour looks very fine as Queen of the Night, all in black tulle, with silver stars, a crescent moon in her dark hair, and a stuffed owl perched upon her shoulder.

"Well, Olga, so you are going to give up art for matrimony? I am grieved to hear this piece of news; you cannot serve two masters. You will fail."

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"Yes, madame, I shall paint more than ever. I do not see why a woman should become a nonentity when she marries. I shall have a studio in our town house; besides, we shall be six months every year on the Continent."

"We shall see," growls Madame Latour. "Do not believe the promises made before marriage. Tell me what Mr. Dashwood says after the ceremony is over. No, I am disappointed; you ought not to have promised me to give yourself entirely to Art, and then, when a handsome young fellow comes over here, you give up everything for him. *Voilà les femmes!*—no tenacity, no decision of character, no strong will."

"I am catching it," whispers Olga to me; "but it is no use my trying to persuade Madame that I shall paint pictures after my marriage; but I *will*, and very likely I shall make Horace study Art."

A few days after the ball, Horace departs, Uranie calling him a "varrie naughtie boy." He feels he deserves the reproach; he gives Uranie a sovereign to pacify her, and tells her that she must not abuse him when he is gone.

Mr. Morris leaves the *pension* without bidding Olga or me good-bye. There is a report that he is engaged to be married to the wily widow, who has been making herself strong in Art, and copying at the Louvre.

Mr. Blake goes to Cork to visit his family; it is rather a curious coincidence that Miss Magee and her mother should be going over to Erin at that particular time. Miss Hutchinson has gone to New York to study the institutions of the mighty republic. Olga and I, with great regret, bid adieu to Madame Dupont, and all the inmates of the *pension*.

We leave on a sultry morning at the end of June. Uranie has tears in her eyes as she bids us adieu, and declares that we really are "varrie naughtie" to leave. When we reach the station we do not find either Mr. Morris or Mr. Blake awaiting us; and it is with mixed feelings of pleasure and pain that Olga and I leave bright, beautiful Paris for dreary, dirty London; but Olga declares, with a blush, that it will no longer be dismal, but delightful.

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The Greville Memoirs.

No. II.

This has been a winter of controversy. Everybody seems quarrelling with everybody on every imaginable subject. Mr. Gladstone is belabouring the venerable Pope Pius with every missile that suggests itself to his excursive mind. Dr. Newman has dissected Mr. Gladstone's arguments in his usual quiet, cutting style. Archbishop Manning has just joined in the fray. Mr. Gladstone, of course, is preparing a reply; so when this quarrel will be over no one on this earth can, by any possibility, imagine. Monsignor Capel and Canon Liddon are differing about the holiest of mysteries in the columns of the *Times*, whilst delighted sceptics are proposing to abolish this and all other religious difficulties by dispensing with Christianity altogether.

The Dean of Westminster, a truly good man, always ready to bless and bury anybody, is attempting to soothe the belligerent ecclesiastics; but alas! his efforts to throw oil on the troubled waters are of no avail. Mr. Matthew Arnold is in the midst of a hot engagement about "Literature and Dogma," and is bearing heavily on his opponents who dare to doubt the virtues of "sweetness and light." Lord Russell has just brought out his 'Recollections,' in which he terms Mr. Lowe a bandit, and Mr. Lowe is retaliating on his venerable assailant with more than his usual acerbity.

The most ribald publications against every institution in the land are selling by thousands in the streets; whilst Sir Arthur Helps and Mr. Theodore Martin are piping a melodious duet in honour of the Prince Consort and Baron Stockmar. Then the peace of families has been disturbed by quarrels amongst the elderly members as to whether they are to be inclosed in undertakers' orthodox lead coffins, or in Mr. Seymour Haden's odoriferous flower-baskets, much to the disgust and horror of the juniors, who have no desire to leave the pleasant land of pantomimes in any way whatsoever.

With all these controversies we have nothing to do. It is the Greville quarrel that interests us. It is a mighty pretty quarrel as it stands; any further explanation will only enliven it.

But before entering into it, we must continue our notice of some of the characters in the memoirs.

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With respect to the Duke and Duchess of York Mr. Greville's tone is favourable:—

"The Duke of York is the only one of the Princes who has the feelings of an English gentleman; his amiable disposition and excellent temper have conciliated for him the regard and esteem of men of all parties, and he has endeared himself to his friends by the warmth and steadiness of his attachments, and from the implicit confidence they all have in his truth, straightforwardness, and sincerity. He is very easily amused, and particularly with jokes full of coarseness and indelicacy; the men with whom he lives most are *très-polissons*, and *la polissonnerie* is the *ton* of his society."

Mr. Greville's description of the Sunday parties at Oatlands is in entire conformity with the accounts given by Monk Lewis, and in 'The Table Talk of Samuel Rogers':—

"*August 4th.*—I went to Oatlands on Saturday. We played at whist till *four in the morning*. On Sunday we amused ourselves with eating fruit in the garden, and shooting at a mark with pistols, and playing with the monkeys."

The Duke and Duchess were in great pecuniary distress, and once the party was obliged to break up because there were no funds:—

"When the Duchess came down there was no water in the house. She asked the reason, and was informed the water came from pipes from St. George's Hill, which were stopped up with sand, and as the workmen were never paid they would not clean them out."

We should think these Sunday parties must have rather shocked the good people of Weybridge, therefore we are glad to hear from Mr. Greville that although the Duke played at whist till four o'clock on Sunday morning, he also went to church.

Of the Duke of Cumberland we have a photograph by his brother George the Fourth:—

"There never was a father well with his son, or husband with his wife, or a friend with his friend, that he did not try to make mischief between them."

The Duke of Gloucester, we think, makes only one observation recorded in these journals, is written down as a "fool," and no more is heard of him.

The Duke of Wellington's political character is fairly drawn; blame is attached to him occasionally for his want of foresight and ignorance of public opinion. His wonderful way of governing George the Fourth is graphically described, and he passes through the dreadful ordeal of these journals always a great man—always the Duke.

The Duke has been much censured for his refusing to serve under Canning when he became Prime Minister, but there seems to be much truth in the stories about Mr. Canning's intrigues with the Whigs, and even Lord Dalling, in his 'Character of Canning,' alludes to his worship of the "Conyngham Tribe."

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Mr. Greville relates as follows:—

"Not very long after, Canning got into favour, and in this way: Harriet Wilson, at the time of her connection with Lord Ponsonby, got hold of some of Lady Conyngham's letters to him, and she wrote to Ponsonby, threatening, unless he gave her a large sum, to come to England and publish everything she could. This produced dismay among all the parties, and they wanted to get Ponsonby away, and to silence the woman. In this dilemma Knighton advised the King to have recourse to Canning, who saw the opening to favour, jumped at it, and instantly offered to provide for Ponsonby, and do anything which could relieve the King from trouble. Ponsonby was sent to Buenos Ayres forthwith, and the letters were bought up. From this time Canning grew in favour, which he took every means to improve, and shortly gained complete ascendency over the King."

Lord Dalling gives the following account:—

"Lady Conyngham had been supposed in early life to have greatly admired (there was no scandal, I should say, attached to this admiration) Lord Ponsonby, then the finest gentleman of his day, and distinguished in the 'Memoirs of Harriet Wilson' as the only man who ever looked well in a cotton nightcap. Lord Ponsonby, who had been long absent, returned from the Ionian Islands, where he had held a small office, not a little desirous to get a better place than the one he quitted. He met Lady Conyngham at Lady Jersey's (so went the story of the day), and Lady Conyngham fainted. So interesting a piece of gossip soon reached the ear of the monarch. The friendship of old men is very often as romantic as the love of young ones. His Majesty took to his bed, declared himself ill, and would see no one. All business was stopped. After waiting some time, Mr. Canning at last obtained an interview. George IV. received him lying on a couch in a darkened room. 'What's the matter?' 'I am very ill, Mr. Canning.' 'I shall not occupy your Majesty for more than five minutes. It is very desirable to send Envoys, without delay, to the States of South America that are about to be recognised.' The King groaned, and moved impatiently. 'I have been thinking it would be most desirous to select a man of rank for one of those posts, and I thought of proposing Lord Ponsonby to your Majesty for Buenos Ayres.' 'Ponsonby!' said the King, rising a little from his reclining position; 'a capital appointment! a clever fellow, though an idle one. Mr. Canning, may I ask you to draw that curtain a little. A very good appointment; is there anything else, Canning, you wish me to attend to?' From that moment, said the person who told me this story, Mr. Canning's favour rose more and more rapidly."

In the able review of Lord Dalling's work in the 'Quarterly,' it is stated that the person who told this curious story was no other than the Princess Lieven, who is mentioned by Mr. Greville as keeping a journal—a very amusing one it must be.

Some of the most amusing anecdotes, particularly those about Lord Brougham, proceed from Lord Sefton, whose character is thus portrayed by his friend Mr. Greville:—

"I have rarely seen the effects of a neglected education and a vivacious temperament manifested in a more remarkable way than in Sefton, who

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has naturally a great degree of cleverness, but who, from the above causes and the absence of the habit of moral discipline and of calm and patient reflection, is a fool, and a very mischievous one."

When Lord Brougham accepted the office of Lord Chancellor, Lord Sefton, who persuaded him to take it, seems to have installed himself as a kind of "Sancho Panza" to the great man:—

"*November 22nd.*—Dined at Sefton's. Lord Grey in excellent spirits, and Brougham, whom Sefton bantered from the beginning to the end of the dinner. Be Brougham's political errors what they may, his gaiety, temper, and admirable social qualities make him delightful, to say nothing of his more solid merits of liberality, generosity, and charity; for charity it is to have taken the whole family of one of his brothers, who is dead—nine children—and maintained and educated them. Sefton did nothing but quiz Brougham. After dinner he walked out before him with the fire-shovel for the mace, and left him no repose the whole evening."

Lord Brougham's judicial qualities were more than dubious. "He tells Sefton that he likes his office, but that it is a mere plaything;" and being a plaything, he was at leisure to attend to politics; and it was chiefly by his speeches and the wonderful influence that he then had in the country that the Reform Bill was carried.

Mr. Greville states:—

"That he never met any man whose conversation impressed him with such an idea of his superiority over others, and when he left Panshanger, Rogers, who had not been able to get in a word, exclaimed, 'This morning Solon, Lycurgus, Demosthenes, Archimedes, Sir Isaac Newton, Lord Chesterfield, and a great many more went away in one post-chaise.'"

These distinguished characters appeared in all their glory at Buxton's Brewery:—

"*June 7th.*—Dined with Sefton yesterday, who gave me an account of a dinner at Fowell Buxton's; on Saturday to see the brewery at which Brougham was the Magnus Apollo. Sefton is excellent as a commentator on Brougham; he says that he watches him incessantly, never listens to anybody else when he is there, and rows him unmercifully afterwards for all the humbug, nonsense, and palaver he hears him talk to people. There were twenty-seven at dinner. Talleyrand was to have gone, but was frightened by being told that he would get nothing but beefsteaks and porter, so he stayed away. They dined in the brew-house, and visited the whole establishment. There were people ready to show and explain everything, but not a bit—Brougham took the explanation of everything into his own hands, the mode of brewing, the machinery, down to the feeding of the cart-horses. He affected to study the ledger, and made various pertinent remarks on the manner of book-keeping."

Then an amusing incident happens:—

"There was a man there whom Brougham called 'Cornelius' (Sefton did not know who he was), with whom he seemed very familiar. While Brougham was talking he dropped his voice, on which Cornelius said, 'Earl

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Grey is listening,' that he might speak louder and nothing be lost. He was talking of Paley, and said that 'although he did not always understand his own meaning, he always contrived to make it intelligible to others,' on which Cornelius said, 'My good *friend*, if he made it so clear to others he must have had some comprehension of it himself,' on which Sefton attacked him afterwards, and swore that he was a mere child in the hands of Cornelius, that 'he never saw anybody so put down.'"

We are surprised that Mr. Reeve did not take some pains to inform us who this redoubtable "Cornelius" was; but perhaps the judicious editor thought it beneath him to inquire about a man "whom Sefton did not know." Anybody who will take the trouble to search the pleasant 'Memoirs of Sir Fowell Buxton,' will see at once that the "man whom Sefton did not know" was no other than the philanthropic Quaker, the friend of Mrs. Opie, Mr. John Joseph Gurney. Cornelius was a modest as well as a "just" man, and he gives the conversation about Paley without recording his own telling reply:—

"Something led us, Lord Brougham and myself, to talk about Paley, and I mentioned the story of his having on his death-bed condemned his 'Moral Philosophy,' and declared his preference of the 'Horæ Paulinæ' above all his other works. This led Brougham to speak of those works. 'Did you ever hear that King George the Third was requested to make Paley a bishop?' The King refused, and taking down the 'Moral Philosophy' from the shelf, he showed Pitt the passage in which he justifies subscription on the ground of expediency. 'This,' said the king, 'is my reason for not making him a bishop.' Lord Grey overheard the Chancellor's story and confirmed it, but, added the Chancellor, 'I believe the true reason why George the Third refused to make Paley a bishop was that he compared the divine right of kings to the divine rights of constables!'"

Sir Fowell Buxton, in a letter, gives an additional anecdote of the Chancellor's exploits. "When they were in the stables somebody said, 'Now the Lord Chancellor will be at a loss; at all events, he knows nothing about horses.' However, fortune favoured him, for he selected one of the best of them, and pointed out his merits. Some one proposed that he should get on his back, and ride him round the yard, which he seemed very willing to do."

The party seems to have been a great success. Cornelius describes it "as a flowing, exhilarating, and not altogether uninstructive day."

"Lord Grey looked careworn." No wonder; for he had eaten "six beefsteaks," and had seen the gambols of his Lord Chancellor. Luckily he was spared the sight of his riding round the yard on a dray-horse. Unfortunately for the cause of temperance "The Gruncher" was not present at the dinner, for he would have rivalled Lord Grey in the matter of beefsteaks, partaken of sundry pots of porter, had an indigestion, and denounced brewers in general, and porter in particular, with a cruel vigour that would have thrown the diatribes of Sir Wilfrid Lawson into the shade.

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Then we have the Chancellor in love, but not, we hope, with the same Mrs. P—— who, according to Mr. Greville, flirted with Lord Palmerston:—

"The Chancellor went down, and, in presence of the ladies, attired in his golden robes, 'and especially before Mrs. P., to whom he makes love,' gave a judgment in some case in which a picture of Nell Gwynne was concerned, and he was very proud of the delicacy of his judgment."

Then Mr. Greville informs us that

"The Chancellor had intended to go junketing on the Rhine with Mrs. P., and this project was only marred by his discovering that he could not leave the country without putting the great seal in commission at a cost to himself of £1400. This was a larger price than he was disposed to pay, so he went off to Brougham instead."

There might have been another reason. Antony's junketing on the Cydnus with Cleopatra lost him the world. The climate of the Rhine is frightfully relaxing; and as Cato could not trust himself at Baiæ, the Chancellor was prudent in retiring to the virtuous breezes of his native Westmoreland.

It would have been well if he had stayed there, but off he went on a political "junketing" excursion to Scotland, astonished his friends, and even his enemies, by informing an after-dinner assembly that he would write "by the night's post" to inform the King of the enthusiastic manner in which His Majesty's health had been drunk.

We believe the expletives that rolled about the Royal Pavilion in Brighton at this escapade would have astonished the army "that swore terribly in Flanders."

Then came that chilling November. The ministers were all summarily dismissed, and the last glimpse we have of the Chancellor's official career is when the new ministers were sworn in. Mr. Greville writes that

"It was amusing to watch them (ex-cabinet) as they passed through the camp of their enemies; all interchanged some slight civility except Brougham, *who stalked through, looking as black as thunder*, and took no notice of anybody."

It was at Holland House that Mr. Greville first met Macaulay. He sat by him at dinner without knowing who he was. Macaulay was talking with Lord Holland, and he made some remark about Alfieri:—

"This remark and the manner of it gave me the notion that he was a dull fellow, for it came out in a way which bordered on the ridiculous, so as to excite something like a sneer."

It was not till Lord Auckland said, "Mr. Macaulay, will you take a glass of wine?" that Mr. Greville was aware of the great man:—

"I thought I should have dropped off my chair—it was Macaulay, the

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man I had been so long curious to see and hear. It was not till he stood up that I was aware of all the vulgarity of his appearance; not a ray of intellect beams from his countenance, a lump of more ordinary clay never inclosed a more powerful mind and lively imagination."

Mr. Greville says of Macaulay's conversation, as a great many others have said, that it was "more than society required." We fancy that it was more agreeable to those who came to listen than to those who came to talk:—

"He wants variety, elasticity and gracefulness; his is a roaring torrent, and not a meandering stream of talk. I believe we should all of us have been glad to exchange some of his sense for some of Sydney Smith's nonsense. He said he had read Sir Charles Grandison fifteen times."

Sydney Smith used humorously to complain that Macaulay never heard the sound of his voice, and called his memory "a great engine of colloquial oppression."

In India he was not only considered a "roaring torrent," but as a check to real conversation. We give an extract from a letter written from India by a distinguished friend of Macaulay on this point:—

"I do twaddle horribly already, and should not think it right to do otherwise, it would be particular. There is a lady staying here who said yesterday she had met Mr. Macaulay at dinner. 'I never saw such a man for one who pretends to be clever—it was a small party—and he would not let anybody speak but himself, and he went on about Canning and Robespierre, and Pitt and Fox, and people that nobody knew, and quoted poetry! actually verses at dinner! The master of the house tried to stop him, and said, "Now, let us change the subject. Mr. Anderson, have you seen the Chief Justice?" and then Mr. Macaulay began to talk about the criminal code, and never would listen to any *real* conversation; poor Mr. B——n tried to tell us about his grey horse, and Mr. Macaulay really did not hear. Mr. Smith went to sleep, and Miss B——n kept looking at me, for I was the *Burra Beebee*, but he talked so I could not give the signal for the ladies to move. I think he is anything but a clever man, and quite a check to *real* conversation!' I wish you could hear what our *real* conversation is, but only wait, you will when we go home."

After his return from India, Sydney Smith said,* "I think his sojourn in India has improved him; his conversation is now enlivened by gleams of silence." Lady Holland always had her eye on him, and would not let him bore her guests. The following is an extract from a note-book in our possession:—

"Lady Holland sent Harold † to Lady Harriet Baring,‡ who was sitting next to Macaulay, to say 'If Macaulay bores you let me know, and I'll make him talk of something else.' Lady Harriet returned for answer that he did not in the least, but in five minutes afterwards Harold came with the same message."

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* From a note-book. † The page. ‡ Afterwards Lady Ashburton.

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Lady Holland seems to have tyrannised over her friends in the most absolute style. Mr. Hayward relates how she drove Lord Melbourne from her dinner-table to his own house by making him shift his place. Mr. Greville complains that once the table was so full the guests could not use their arms, and she would not let Lord Holland, who was not eating any dinner, retire in order to make them comfortable. Moore gives a similar account. One day when the table was unusually crowded a new guest arrived, Lady Holland ordered room to be made. "It must be made," groaned somebody, "for it does not exist." Nobody seems to have ever faced her but Allen, who made an attack on her, according to Mr. Greville, "for her *brutal*" remarks. Sydney Smith said of her,* "She is a mob in herself; if you were to read the Riot Act she would disperse." Unfortunately the plan was never tried.

Talleyrand talked one day with Mr. Greville of the Count de St. Germain, about whom so much is written in the old French 'Mémoires':—

"He said of the Count de St. Germain (whom he never saw) that there is an account of him in Craufurd's book; nobody knew whence he came nor whither he went; he appeared at Paris suddenly, and disappeared in the same way; lived in a *hôtel garni*; had and paid for everything regularly; he talked of events and history with entire familiarity and correctness which was never at fault, and always of the people as if he had lived with them, and known them, as Talleyrand exemplified it, he would say, 'Un jour che je dînais chez César.'"

In Mr. Quintin Craufurd's† book is the following extraordinary account of this mysterious man:—

"Il venait souvent chez Madame un homme qui etoit bien aussi etonnant qu'une sorcière; c'est le Comte de Saint-Germain (1), qui voulait faire croire qu'il vivoit depuis plusieurs siècles. Un jour, Madame lui dit devant moi, à la toilette: Comment etoit fait François Ier? c'est un roi que j'aurois bien aimé.—Aussi etoit-il tres-aimable, dit Saint-Germain; et il dépeignit ensuite sa figure et toute sa personne comme l'on fait d'un homme qu'on a bien considéré. C'est dommage, ajouta-t-il, qu'il fut trop ardent; je lui aurois donné un bien bon conseil qui l'auroit garanti de tous ses malheurs . . . .; mais il ne l'auroit pas suivi; car il semble qu'il ait une fatalité pour les princes qui fermaient leurs oreilles, c'est-à-dire, celles de leur esprit, aux meilleurs avis, surtout dans les momens critiques.—Et le connétable, dit Madame, qu'en dites-vous?—Je ne puis en dire trop de bien et trop de mal, répondit-il.—La Cour de François Ier, etoit-elle fort belle?—Tres-belle; mais celle de ses petits-fils ‡ la surpassoit infiniment; et du temps de Marie Stuart et de Marguerite de Valois, c'etoit un pays d'enchantement, le temple des plaisirs; ceux de l'esprit s'y mêloient. Les deux

* From a note-book.

† Quintin Craufurd and his wife, then Mrs. Sullivan, were of great assistance to the royal family in their attempt to escape to Varennes.

‡ Francis the Second, Charles the Ninth, Henry the Third.

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reines etoient savantes, faisoient des vers; et c'etoit un plaisir de les entendre. Madame lui dit en riant: Il semble que vous ayez vu tout cela. J'ai beaucoup de mémoire, dit-il, et j'ai beacoup lu l'histoire de France. Quelquefois je m'amuse, non pas à *faire croire*, mais à *laisser croire* que j'ai vécu dans les plus anciens temps."

The description taken by Mr. Craufurd from the 'Journal of a Femme de Chambre de Madame de Pompadour'* solves the mystery. He had "*beaucoup de mémoire*," which, we think, must have surpassed that of Macaulay.

Here is a character of a man almost as wonderful as that of the Comte de St. Germain:—

"The finest gentleman of my young days, who never said to you an unkind thing nor of you a kind one, whose slightest smile was a seductive fascination, whose loudest tone was a flutelike melody, had the sweetest possible way of insinuating his scorn of the human race. The urbanity of his manners made him a pleasant acquaintance, the extent of his reading an accomplished companion. No one was more versed in those classes of literature in which Mephistopheles might have sought polite authorities in favour of his demoniacal views of philosophy. He was at home in the correspondence between cardinals and debauchees in the time of Leo the Tenth. He might have taken high honours in an examination upon the memoirs illustrating the life of the French salons in the *ancien régime*. He knew the age of Louis Quinze so well that to hear him you might suppose he was just fresh from a *petit souper* at the Parc aux Cerfs.

"Too universally agreeable not to amuse those present at the expense of the absent, still even in sarcasm he was never ill-natured; in all graver matters if the man he last dined with committed some act which all honest men blamed, my misanthrope evinced his gentle surprise not at the act, but the blame. 'What did you expect?' he would say, with an adorable indulgence, 'he was a man *like yourselves*.'

"Sprung from one of the noblest lineages of Christendom, possessed of a fortune which he would smilingly say 'was not large enough to allow him to give a shilling to anybody else,' but which, 'prudently spent on himself, amply sufficed for all the elegant wants of a man so emphatically single;' this darling of fashion had every motive conceivable not to be the utter rogue which he assumed *every other fellow-creature to be*."

The above portrait, by the master hand of Lord Lytton, is no other than that of Mr. Greville's oracle, Henry, Lord de Ros, the most accomplished gentleman of his time; the arbiter of fashion, the "eleventh commandment."

A curious incident happened at Lord Glengall's play, which is thus narrated by Mr. Greville:—

"*December 3rd.*—I went to see Glengall's play again. Henry De Ros, Glengall and I went together. I was very much amused (*but did not venture to show it*) at a point in one of the scenes between Lureall and Sir S. Foster; the latter said, 'Let me tell you, sir, that a country gentleman

* Madame de Hausset.

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residing on his estate is as valuable a member of society as a man of fashion in London who lives by plundering others who have more money and less wit than himself;' when De Ros turned to Glengall and said, 'Richard, there appears to me to be a great deal of twaddle in this play; besides, you throw over the *good cause*.'"

Lord Lytton gives *his* account of the same scene:—

"In the more brilliant period of this amiable man-scorner's social career, once, and once only, he is said to have given way to anger. One of his associates (I say designedly associates, not friends, out of respect for his memory, since friendship is a virtue, and he denied its existence), one of his associates wrote a play. The comedy was acted. My hero honoured the performance by appearing in the author's box. Leaning forward so as to be seen of all men, he joined his hands in well-bred applause of every abortive joke and grammatical solecism, till, in a critical part of the play, there occurred a popular clap-trap—a something said in praise of virtue and condemnation of vice. The gallery, of course, responded to the clap-trap, expressing noisy satisfaction at the only sentiment familiar to their comprehension which they had hitherto heard. But my fine archetype of modern misanthropy paused aghast, suspended 'the soft collision of applauding gloves,' and, looking at his associate as reproachfully as Cæsar might have looked at Brutus when he sighed forth 'Et tu Brute,' let fall these withering words, 'Why, Billy,* this is betraying the Good Old Cause.' So saying, he left the box resentful."

Who can wonder that a disciple of such a Gamaliel should have become a cynic and a man-scorner, but certainly not an "amiable" specimen of the kind? Then how Mr. Greville was petted! Kings fed, and Dukes and Duchesses worshipped him. Even the business of the nation was stopped to please him.

"*Jan. 30th.*—There was to have been a Council, but it was put off on account of *my gout*. I remember once before a Council was put off because I was at Egham for the races; that was a Council, in '27, I think, to *admit foreign corn*."

Shade of Cobden! a hungry people, general distress, and a council to admit the staff of life put off because Mr. Greville wished to win some money amongst "the blackguards and fools" at Egham races! We hope Mr. Greville won his money; when he lost it he was apt to moralise, and there are many reflections as to where true happiness is to be found.

Mr. Greville's opinion is that it exists in "contented mediocrity." This also was the opinion of Charles the Second, who said that the happiest position in life was "an Englishman with a competent income, above the rank of a constable, but below that of a justice of peace."

We have now to make some remarks about the discussions that have taken place with respect to these memoirs.

* Lord Lytton evidently imagined that the play had been written by another noble author.

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When the book first came out there was nothing but a chorus of approbation from every critic in the land, almost without exception.

Then there came rumours that this or that great personage was horrified at the startling contents; that a distinguished member of the household had taken to his bed, where his friends hoped he would remain; that the clerks of the Privy Council office were in strong hysterics; that Sir Erskine May had fainted after reading that Lord Lyndhurst had called the Speaker of the House of Commons a *damned tiresome bitch.*'

We believe there was some foundation for all these rumours. And then it was announced that the celebrated "old reviewer" was about to dish "Mr. Reeve" in the pages of the 'Quarterly.'

We cannot think that "the old reviewer" has been so successful as usual in his attack; it does not seem written with the same incisive pen which put down Mrs. Beecher Stowe and blew the Franciscan theory to the winds; but Richard the Third must have been nervous between two clergymen; and we fancy the "old reviewer" was embarrassed by the two "distinguished members of the household."

When the fight took place between Sayers and Heenan, a great organ of the Peace Society had an article in which it denounced, with natural disgust, this breach of civilisation; but it ended it with, "Our readers will find in another column the disgusting details." We turned to that column, and there we found, to our horror, the best and bloodiest account of that great international combat.

So in the 'Quarterly,' the "old reviewer" scarifies the "judicious editor" and his idol with an unsparing hand, but he gives "details" which we carefully abstain from imparting to the grave, sober, and modest readers of 'Temple Bar.'

Of course the attack in the 'Quarterly' was quickly followed by the announcement of a "fourth edition with notes," and it was hoped that the judicious editor would have expunged two anecdotes about *living* ladies, which ought never to have been published, even if the stories were true. We must say that after the letters of Lady Westmoreland and that old and faithful servant of the public, the once, and to those who recollect her youth, the ever charming Mrs. Charles Kean, we think they ought to have been entirely omitted, and some apology been made; but Mr. Reeve actually by his note seems to believe that the anecdote about Lady Westmoreland "*does the greatest honour to her humanity and good feelings.*"

A fourth edition will be quickly followed by a fifth. The book has made a *furore* in America. Even the readers of the *New York Herald* allow it to be the "raciest" publication of modern times.

There is a report, which we hope is true, that Mr. Reeve is about to give, in imitation of Thackeray, a public reading of "extracts"

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from his volumes; it will be a tremendous success. The Duke of Cumberland's "scramble" with the wife of a Lord Chancellor will bring down the house. 'The Lady of Fashion and the Forger,' as interpreted by Mr. Reeve, will draw tears from every eye; the "details" of Royal customs and habits will excite the deepest interest and unmixed wonder; and if Mr. Reeve could manage to get good portraits of Mr. Greville and his *friends* hung about the Hall, we think we shall have what Cornelius calls "a flowing, exhilarating, and not altogether uninstructive day."

It is said that the unpublished volumes are not to see the light for fifteen years. But then consider the feelings of those who *know* they are in them, and even those who *imagine* that they are. There are several families whose peace of mind is seriously disturbed by this dreadful idea.

There was a literary party in a street near Russell Square; "the conversation raged;" Mr. Greville was present and seemed to enjoy it, but the surviving members of the family recollect that he went in for *fricandeau*, and that he looked pale after "dinner," and they are very anxious to know what "The Gruncher" says about *that*.

Then there is a nobleman of majestic deportment, and who thinks himself "absolute wisdom;" some of his malicious friends have told him he is written down as "a solemn ass" in the remaining volumes, and he is rabid to know what is stated about *him*.

Then there are the "fools and idiots" of society (a harsh judgment, but Mr. Greville had never seen them skating in the dog days), whose playful and innocent flirtations were the table talk of a censorious world. Many of them are now members of Dr. Cumming's or Mr. Spurgeon's congregation, therefore they are awfully anxious as to what is whispered about *them*.

The next phase in the Greville controversy will be the appearance of Lord Winchelsea's poem, which is thus announced in the 'Publisher's Circular':—

> "Lord Winchelsea has a poem in the press, which is a strong satire on the Memoirs; it is named, we hear, 'Greville be-Reeved, or new Wax (Whacks) for old Cobblers.' The old cobbler is Mr. Reeve."

Lord Winchelsea's father has been called a "blockhead" and a "maniac," therefore the poem will be a filial attention to his battered sire. Lord Winchelsea's verses are always worth reading, and as nobody better knew Mr. Greville's "little ways," we anticipate a great treat; but we hope the other distinguished noblemen whose relations have been bespattered will not break out in poetry, but stick to their natural element.

We have now done with the book, and we must say that the

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more we read it the more we enjoy it. If people would give up their prejudices against having their dead relations abused, there would not be a dissentient voice as to its merits.

It is impossible to write down a book like this. A "conscientious critic" lifts up his voice "like a pelican in the wilderness." The "conscientious critic" informs us that "Society is shocked." We were not aware that Society was ever shocked at anything.

Sir Harry Englefield gives an account * of a lecture delivered by Falconet,

"Shortly after completing the model of his equestrian statue of Czar Peter. He took for his subject the celebrated horse of Marcus Aurelius in the capitol, and pointed out as many faults in it as ever a jockey did in an animal he was about to purchase; but something came over him, vain as he was, when he was about to conclude his harangue. He took a long pinch of snuff, and, eyeing his own faultless model, exclaimed with a sigh, 'Cependant, messieurs, il faut avouer, cette vilaine bête-là est vivante et la mienne est morte.'"

That is the case with the "Greville Memoirs;" a critic may write a faultless article against the book, but still he must know that his criticism will die, whilst the book will live. "*Cette vilaine bête-là est vivante et la mienne est morte.*" It will rank with the 'Memoirs of St. Simon and Lord Hervey.'

Moore mentions an Irishman in the pit, who cried out to a friend acting Othello, "Larry, there is the least taste in life of your linen hanging out." Well, we think, much as we are indebted to him, that there is a little of Mr. Reeve's linen hanging out, and we hope he will put it right before the next edition. He has had a difficult task, as we know how hard it is for the Heavy Father of a company to do a light part which the "old reviewer" would have played to perfection.

We must again thank him for having brought out, in defiance of every consideration of humanity, the most indiscreet, instructive, abusive, fascinating book that ever disgusted and delighted a "wicked world."

* In the 'Life of Scott.'

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The Dean's Watch.

By MM. ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN.

I.

The day before Christmas of 1832 my friend Wilfrid, his double-bass slung over his shoulder, and I with my violin under my arm, were on our way from the Black Forest to Heidelberg. There had been an extraordinary fall of snow, and as far as we could see across the immense desert plain no trace of road or pathway was discernible. The north wind whistled its shrill *ariette* with monotonous persistence, and Wilfrid, his wallet flattened against his meagre spine, his long heron-legs stretched wide apart, and the peak of his flat cap drawn down to his nose, went on before me, humming some joyous passage from 'Ondine.' Now and then he turned round and cried with a strange smile:

"Comrade, play me the valse from 'Robin.' I feel inclined to dance."

A burst of laughter followed these words, and the good fellow pushed on more vigorously than ever. I kept pace with him, sinking in the snow up to my knee at every step, and feeling my spirits sinking by slow degrees.

The heights of Heidelberg were coming into sight on the far side of the horizon, and we were hoping to reach our journey's end before nightfall, when we heard the gallop of a horse behind us. It was then about five o'clock in the evening, and great flakes of snow were swirling in the dusky air. The rider presently came up within twenty paces of us, drew rein, and scrutinised us out of the corner of his eye; and we did the same to him.

Imagine a large man with red beard and hair, wearing a superb three-cornered hat; over his brown coat a wide-skirted fox-skin pelisse, and his hands in fur-lined gloves reaching to his elbows—some big-paunched sheriff or burgomaster—a handsome valise fastened on the croup of his vigorous steed. In short, unmistakably a personage.

"Eh, eh, my lads," he said, withdrawing one of his great hands from mufflers hung to his rhingrave, "no doubt we are going to Heidelberg to play our music?"

Wilfrid looked keenly askance at the traveller and answered sharply:

"Does that in any way interest you, monsieur?"

"Rather; and I have a piece of good advice to give you on the subject."

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"Advice?"

"If you don't refuse it."

Wilfrid, taking longer strides than before, walked on without answering; and I noticed that the traveller had exactly the look of a large cat—ears standing out from his head, half-closed eyelids, frizzled moustaches, and soft and fatherly manner.

"My dear friend," he continued, addressing me frankly, "you will do well to return the way you have come."

"Why, monsieur?"

"The illustrious Maestro Pimenti, of Novara, has announced a Christmas concert at Heidelberg; all the town is going to it, and you will not earn a *kreutzer*."

But, turning ill-temperedly, Wilfrid replied:

"We scorn your maestro and all the Pimentis in the world! Look at this young man—look well at him! He hasn't yet a scrub of beard on his chin, and he has never played anywhere but in the little wine-shops of the Black Forest, for the charcoal-burners and their girls to dance to. Well, this little man, with his long flaxen locks and his big blue eyes, defies all your Italian charlatans. His left hand holds treasures of melody, grace, and suppleness; his right, the most magnificent bow-stroke that the Lord sometimes, in his moments of good humour, deigns to accord to poor mortals."

"Aha!" said the other, "is it so, indeed?"

"What I tell you is the truth," cried Wilfrid, trudging along and blowing his red fingers.

I thought he was making game of the traveller, who followed us at a slow trot.

He went on in this manner for more than half a league in silence. Suddenly the unknown said to us sharply:

"Whatever your merit may be, take yourselves back to the Black Forest. We've vagabonds enough at Heidelberg, without having you to swell the number. I advise you for your good—especially under the present circumstances. Profit by my counsel!"

Wilfrid was about to return him an indignant answer, but he had put his horse into a gallop and was already riding along the Elector's grand avenue. An immense flight of crows rose from the plain, and seemed to follow the stranger's course, filling the air with their clamours.

We reached Heidelberg towards seven o'clock in the evening, and certainly saw Pimenti's grand posting-bill on all the walls of the city: "Grand concerto, solo," &c.

The same evening, going the round of the beer-houses of the theologians and the philosophers, we met several Black Forest musicians, old comrades, who engaged us to join their band. There was old

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Brêmer, the violoncellist; his two sons, Ludwig and Karl, two good second violins; Heinrich Siebel, the clarionet; big Berthe with her harp; then Wilfrid and his double bass, and myself as first violin.

It was agreed that we should go about together, and that after Christmas we should share our gains. Wilfrid had already hired, for us two, a sleeping-room on the sixth story of the little public-house called the *Pied de Mouton*, in the middle of the Holdergasse, at five *kreutzers* the night. Properly speaking the room was a loft; but fortunately it contained a stove, made of sheet-iron, and we lit a fire in it to dry ourselves.

While we were quietly seated, roasting chestnuts and drinking a mug of wine, little Annette, the servant of the house, in a poppy-coloured petticoat and black velvet cap, blushing cheeks, and lips like a bunch of cherries, mounted the stairs four steps at a time, tapped at the door, and then came and threw herself joyfully into my arms.

I had known this pretty little girl a long while; we belonged to the same village, and, if I must tell you the whole truth, her sparkling eyes and sprightly manner had captivated my heart.

"I've come to have a moment's talk with you," she said to me, seating herself on a box. "I saw you go upstairs just now—and here I am."

She then set off chatting, asking me news of this one and that one, in fact of everybody in the village; giving me hardly time to answer any of her questions. Sometimes she stopped to look at me with inexpressible tenderness; and we should have gone on so till the next day, if Mother Grédel Dick had not called out on the stairs:

"Annette! Annette! are you coming?"

"I'm coming, madame! I'm coming!" cried the poor child, springing up in surprise. She gave me a little tap on the cheek and hurried to the door; but at the moment of going out of the room she stopped:

"Ah!" she cried, returning, "I'd forgotten to tell you. Have you heard of it?"

"Of what?"

"The death of our pro-rector Zâhn?"

"How does that concern us?"

"Perhaps not; but take care, take care, if your papers are not all perfectly correct. At eight o'clock to-morrow morning they'll come and demand them of you. They've arrested a great many, a great many people, during the last fortnight. The pro-rector was murdered in the library of the St. Christophe cloister yesterday evening. Last week the old high priest, Ulmet Elias, of the Jews' Street, was murdered in a similar manner. A few days before that the old midwife, Christina Hâas, and Séligmann, the dealer in agates, of the Rue Durlach, were

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assassinated. So my poor Kasper," she said tenderly, "take great care of yourself, and I hope all your papers are in order."

While we were speaking the cries below were being continued.

"Annette! Annette! are you coming down? Oh! the wretch, to leave me all alone!"

The voices of the customers were also heard, demanding wine, beer, ham, and sausages. We were obliged to part. Annette hurried downstairs as she had hurried up, and answered in her sweet voice:

"Good gracious! good gracious, madame! What is the matter, that you call out for me like that? One might imagine the house was on fire, at least."

Wilfrid went and closed the door, and then, when he had resumed his place, we looked at each other somewhat uneasily.

"That's singular news," he said. "Your papers are all right, are they not?"

"Not a doubt of it."

And I showed him my *livret*.

"Good—mine is the same; I had it properly signed before starting. But all the same these murders will do us no good. I'm afraid we shan't do any business here. Many families are in mourning; and then, besides, there will be the hindrances, the humbug, of the seneschal's court, the anxieties"——

"Bah! you are looking at everything on the dark side," I said to him.

We continued to talk of these strange events till past midnight. The fire in our little stove lit the angle of the roof, the square window with its three cracked panes, the mattress spread under the tiles, the black sloping rafters supporting one another, the little deal table with its shadow flickering on the worm-eaten floor. Now and then a bat, drawn by the warmth, flitted like an arrow along the wall. The wind was heard ingulfing itself in the high chimneys and sweeping the snow-dust from the gutters. I was thinking of Annette, and had relapsed into silence.

Suddenly Wilfrid took off his waistcoat, saying:

"It's time to get to sleep. Put another block of wood on the fire and let's go to bed."

This said, I pulled off my boots; we were stretched on the mattress, the coverlid drawn up to our chins, a big log under our heads for a pillow. Wilfrid was soon asleep. The light of the little stove came and went; the wind redoubled out of doors; and still thinking, I, in turn, fell tranquilly off to sleep.

About two o'clock in the morning I was awakened by an indescribable noise; I thought at first it was a cat rushing along the

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gutters; but after listening with my ear against the tiles, my uncertainty was soon removed—somebody was walking on the roof.

I nudged Wilfrid with my elbow to wake him.

"Hush!" he said, grasping my hand.

He had heard the sound as well as I. The light of the nearly expired fire fell faintly upon the crumbling wall. I was going to rise, when the little window, held closed by a piece of brick, was suddenly opened. A pale face, with red hair, phosphorescent eyes, and quivering cheeks, appeared, looking searchingly into the interior. So astounded were we that neither of us had power to utter a cry. The man passed one leg, then the other, through the window, and descended into our loft so cautiously as not to make the slightest sound on alighting on the floor.

This man, with wide round shoulders, thickset, his features knit like those of a tiger on the watch, was no other than the easy-going personage who had given us advice on the road to Heidelberg. But how changed his physiognomy now appeared to us! In spite of the excessive cold, he was in his shirt sleeves; he had nothing on but his breeches, girt about his waist, black silk stockings, and shoes with silver buckles. A long blood-stained knife glittered in his hand.

Wilfrid and I thought ourselves lost. But he seemed not to see us in the oblique shadow of the garret, though the flame in the stove had been fanned up by the icy current of air from the skylight. He crouched down upon a box and shivered with cold in a strange fashion. Suddenly his yellowish-green eyes fixed their gaze on me—his nostrils dilated, and he continued to gaze at me for a full minute. Every drop of blood seemed to leave my veins. Then, turning towards the stove, he coughed in a hoarse tone of voice, like that of a cat, without a muscle of his face starting. He drew from the fob of his breeches a large watch, moved like a man looking to see the hour, and then, either from absence of mind, or from some other motive, placed it on the table. Finally, rising as if in doubt, he considered the window, appeared to hesitate, and went out, leaving the door wide open.

I rose immediately for the purpose of drawing the bolt, but already the steps of the man were creaking on the stairs two storeys below. An irresistible curiosity overcame my terror, and, as I heard him open a window overlooking the yard, I went to a window on the stairs on the same side. The yard, from this height, was as deep down as a well; a wall, fifty or sixty feet high, divided it in two. To the right of this wall was the yard of a pork-butcher; to the left, that of the *Pied de Mouton*. It was covered with damp moss and the wild vegetation that plants itself in the shade. The summit reached from the window opened by the assassin in a straight line to the roof of a large dark-looking house, built at the back of the Bergstrasse. As the

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moon was shining between the large snow-laden clouds, I saw all this at a glance, and shuddered on perceiving the man making his way along the top of the high wall, his head bent forward and his long knife in his hand, while the wind whistled drearily.

He reached the opposite roof and disappeared through a window.

I thought I was dreaming. For some few seconds I stood there, open-mouthed and bare-chested, my hair streaming, under the sleet that fell from the roof. At last, waking from my state of stupor, I returned to our retreat, and rejoined Wilfrid, who looked haggardly at me and murmured a prayer in a low voice. I hastened to put wood into the stove, to put on my clothes, and to draw the bolt of the door.

"Well?" asked my comrade, rising.

"Well," I answered, "we've escaped. If this man has not seen us it is because we owe our lives to God."

"Yes, yes," he replied; "it is one of the murderers of whom Annette told us. Good God! what a face, and what a knife!"

He fell back on the mattress. As for myself, I swallowed at a draught all that was left of the wine in the mug, and as the fire had burned up, the warmth had again spread itself through the chamber, and the bolt of the door was securely drawn, my courage began to return.

Still the watch was there—the man might come back for it. This idea froze us with terror.

"What shall we do now?" said Wilfrid. "The shortest course to take will be to set off at once back to the Black Forest."

"Why should we?"

"I've no longer any inclination to play the double-bass—you can do as you like."

"But why—what should we run away for? Have we committed any crime?"

"Don't speak so loud—don't speak so loud!" he cried. "Only that word *crime*, if anybody overheard it, might bring us to the gibbet. Poor devils like us would serve for examples to others. It does not take long to decide who commits crimes; it would be quite enough if that watch were found here."

"Listen to me, Wilfrid," I said to him; "there's no use in losing your wits. I've no doubt, in my own mind, that a crime has been committed to-night in our neighbourhood; under such circumstances, what ought an honest man to do? Instead of taking to flight, he must assist justice, he must"——

"How?—how can he assist it?"

"The simplest way will be to take the watch to-morrow to the high bailiff, and state to him what has passed."

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"Never! never! I daren't touch this watch!"

"Very well; *I'll* go with it. Let us lie down and try to go to sleep again, if possible."

"I've no wish to go to sleep."

"Then, let us talk; light your pipe, and we'll wait for daylight. There are people still up below, perhaps; if you like, we'll go down."

"I'd rather remain here."

"So be it."

We resumed our places by the side of the fire.

The next morning as soon as it was light I went and took up the watch from the table. It was a very handsome double-dialled watch, the one dial marking the hours, the other the minutes. Wilfrid appeared more reassured.

"Kasper," he said, "I think, after all, it will be better that *I* should go and see the bailiff. You are too young to manage such matters; you'll not explain yourself properly."

"Just as you like," I replied.

"It would appear strange for a man of my age to send a mere boy."

"Very well; I understand, Wilfrid."

He took the watch, and I noticed that his self-love alone urged him to take this resolution; no doubt he would have blushed before his comrades to have shown less courage than me.

We descended from the loft thoughtfully. Passing along the passage which opens into the Rue Saint-Christopher we heard the rattle of glasses and forks, and I recognised the voice of old Brêmer and his two sons, Ludwig and Karl.

"Faith, Wilfrid," I said, "before going out, we should do no harm to take a drink of something."

At the same time I pushed open the room door. Our whole company was there, the violins and horns hanging on the wall and the harp in a corner. We were welcomed with joyous shouts. All bestirred themselves to make room for us at table.

"Good day, comrades!" cried old Brêmer. "Wind! snow! All the beerhouses will be full of company. Every flake that whirls in the air is a florin falling into our pockets."

I perceived my little Annette, fresh, shrewd, smiling at me with eyes and lips of love. This sight cheered me. The best cuts of ham were for me, and every time she came to place a mug on my right her soft hand rested expressively on my shoulder.

Oh! how my heart bounded in thinking of the chestnuts we had crunched together of an evening! Yet the pale face of the murderer passed from time to time before my eyes and made me shudder. I looked at Wilfrid; he was very thoughtful. At length, as the clock struck eight, our band was preparing to set out, when the door opened

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and three police officers, with livid complexions and eyes that glittered like those of rats, followed by several others of the same species, presented themselves on the threshold. One of these, having a long and, as they say, daintily formed nose, and a stout cudgel hanging at his wrist, advanced, crying:

"Your papers, gentlemen."

Everyone hastened to satisfy his demand. Unfortunately, Wilfrid, who was standing by the stove, was seized by a sudden fit of trembling, and, as the experienced eye of the police officer was turned upon him with an equivocal regard, the fatal idea came into his head of slipping the watch into his boot; but before it had reached its destination the officer clapped my comrade on the thigh, and said in a bantering tone:

"Aha! This little business appears to be slightly unpleasant to you?"

Thereupon Wilfrid was seized with a fainting fit, to everybody's great astonishment; he sank back upon a form, pale as death, and Madoc, the chief of the police, without ceremony searched in his trousers, and, with a wicked outburst of laughter, produced the watch. But hardly had he looked at it than he became grave, and turning towards his assistants cried in a terrible voice:

"Let no one leave this place! We've got the whole band! Here's the watch belonging to Dean Daniel Van den Berg. Quick! the handcuffs!"

This order sent an icy thrill into the marrow of our bones. There was terrible excitement. Feeling, myself, that we were lost, I slipped down under the bench next the wall, and while they were putting the irons on poor old Brêmer, his sons, Heinrich, and Wilfrid, who sobbed and protested his innocence, I felt a small hand passed round my neck, the tender hand of Annette, on which I pressed my lips as a last farewell. But she took me by the ear and drew me softly, very softly, from under the bench. I saw the open trap-door of the cellar under one end of the table, I slipped into it, and the door closed.

It was all done in a second, in the midst of the confusion.

I was hardly in my hiding-place before I heard footsteps trampling on the trap door, then all became silent; my poor comrades were gone! Mother Grédel Dick, from her doorstep, shrieked like a peacock that the *Pied de Mouton* had been dishonoured.

I will leave you to imagine what my reflections were during the whole of that day, cowering behind a barrel, my back twisted, my legs bent under me, thinking that if a dog should by any chance come down into the cellar, that if the landlady herself should come to fill a jug, that if the barrel behind which I was concealed were to become empty during the day and another had to be tapped—that the least accident, in short, might destroy me.

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All these ideas and a thousand others passed through my head. I pictured to myself old Brêmer, Wilfrid, Karl, Ludwig, and big Berthe, already hanging upon the gibbet of Harberg, in the midst of a whole flight of crows gorging themselves at their expense. The hair rose on my head.

Annette, not less troubled in mind than myself, out of extreme cautiousness, shut the door every time she came up from the cellar. I heard the old woman call out to her:

"Leave that door alone! What are you thinking of—to waste half your time opening and shutting it?"

The door was then left ajar, and out of the darkness I saw the tables surrounded by new drinkers, and heard exclamations, discussions, and endless stories concerning the famous band.

"The scoundrels!" cried one. "Thanks to heaven they are all captured! What a scourge for Heidelberg! One did not dare to stir out into the streets after ten o'clock. Trade was beginning to suffer. But there's now an end of it, and in a fortnight's time all will be right again."

"These musicians from the Black Forest," cried another, "are nothing but a set of bandits! They get let into houses under pretence of playing music; they take notice of the locks, the coffers, the cupboards, the entrances, and then one fine morning we hear that Master So-and-so has had his throat cut in his bed—that his wife has been murdered, his children strangled, his house stripped from top to bottom, his barn set on fire, or something of the kind. The wretches! They must be exterminated without mercy, if the country is to know any quiet and safety."

"The whole town will go to see them hung," said Mother Grédel, "and it'll be the happiest day of my life. Do you know that but for Dean Daniel's watch no trace of them would ever have been discovered? Yesterday evening the watch disappeared, this morning Master Daniel gave a description of it to the police, an hour afterwards Madoc claps his hand on the whole covey! Ha! ha! ha!"

The whole room rang with laughter. Shame, indignation, fear, made me shudder by turns.

Night came, however. Only a few drinkers remained seated at the tables. I heard the fat landlady, who had been up late the night before, yawn and murmur:

"Ah! when are we going to get to bed?"

One candle alone was left alight in the room.

"Go to bed, madame," said Annette, gently. "I'll sit up alone until these gentlemen go away."

Some of the tipsy guests understood this invitation and went away; but one remained, dozing in front of his jug. The watchman going

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his rounds waked him up, and I heard him go out in his turn, grumbling and staggering, at the door.

"At last he's gone," I said to myself. "Mother Grédel will go to bed and little Annette will not be long before she comes to set me at liberty."

With these pleasant thoughts in my head I was stretching my cramped limbs, when these words of the fat landlady fell upon my ears:

"Annette, go and shut up the house—and don't forget to put up the iron bar—while I go down into the cellar."

This laudable practice appeared to be habitual with her, to assure herself that all was in order.

"But, madame," stammered the girl, "the barrel is not empty; there is no need for you"——

"Mind your own business," interrupted Mother Grédel, whose candle already shone upon the stairs.

I had but just time enough to jam myself once more behind the barrel. The old woman, stooping under the low roof of the cellar, went from one cask to another, and I heard her mutter:

"Oh, the hussey! how she lets the wine run! Wait a bit, wait a bit. I'll teach you to fasten the taps better! Was ever such a thing seen?—was ever such a thing seen?"

The light cast shadows against the damp wall; I cringed into the smallest possible space.

Suddenly, at the moment when I thought the visit was terminated, I heard the old woman utter a sigh—a sigh so long and so doleful, the idea immediately entered my head that something extraordinary must be going on. I ventured to look out of my place of retreat with the utmost caution. What did I see? Mother Grédel Dick, with open mouth and eyes starting from her head, gazing under the barrel behind which I was holding myself motionless. She had perceived one of my feet under the log which served to tilt it, and doubtless imagined that she had discovered the chief of the robbers hidden there for the purpose of murdering her during the night. My resolution was promptly taken; I rose to my feet murmuring:

"Madame, in the name of heaven, take pity on me! I am"——

But without looking at me, and without heeding a word of what I said, she set up a screeching enough to split one's ears, all the time scrambling up the stairs as fast as her corpulency would allow her to move. I, on my part, seized with indescribable terror, hung on to her gown to beseech her on my knees; but that made things worse than ever.

"Help! murder!" she cried. "Oh! oh! Leave me! Take my money! Oh! oh!"

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It was frightful. In vain I cried to her:

"Madame, look at me! I am not what you imagine me to be"——

Bah! she was out of her senses with terror. She raved, she stuttered, she yelled in accents so shrill that, if we had not been underground, all the neighbourhood would have been aroused. In this extremity, carried away by my fury, I climbed over her back, reached the door before her, and clapped it to like thunder, taking care to shoot the bolt in its socket. The light having gone out during this struggle, Mother Grédel was left in darkness, and her voice was only feebly heard, as in the distance.

Exhausted and downcast, I looked at Annette, whose distress equalled my own. We had neither of us strength to utter a word, and we listened to the old woman's cries, that grew weaker and weaker, and at last ceased altogether; she had fainted.

"Oh, Kasper!" cried Annette, joining her hands. "What is to be done? My God! what is to be done? Fly! fly! Somebody may have heard. You have killed her."

"Killed!—I?"——

"Well, well, fly—make your escape! I'll open the door for you."

As she spoke she unbarred the door and I rushed into the street without even thanking her, the ungrateful wretch that I was! But I was so terrified, the danger was so pressing, the sky so dark. The weather was abominable; not a star was in the heavens, not a lamp alight; it blowed and snowed. For half an hour I hurried on without once pausing to take breath. My horror may be imagined when, raising my eyes, I saw that I was in front of the *Pied de Mouton*. In my terror I had made the circuit of the neighbourhood, perhaps, three or four times. My legs were weary and mud-covered, my knees bent under me.

The public-house, so recently deserted, hummed like a beehive; lights were passing from one window to another. No doubt it was full of police officers. Down-hearted, exhausted by cold and hunger, desperate, and not knowing where to find shelter, I then took the most singular of all resolutions.

"Faith!" I said to myself, "if I am to die, I can but die. As well be hung as leave my bones on the road back to the Black Forest."

I went into the public-house, therefore, to give myself up to justice. Among the shabby-looking individuals with battered hats and enormous bludgeons, whom I had seen in the morning, and who were now prying and ferreting all over the house, there was, seated before a table, the high bailiff, Zimmer, dressed in black, with grave air and penetrating eye; and Secretary Roth, in his red wig, with his imposing expression of face and his broad, flat ears, like oyster-shells. Hardly any notice was taken of me, a circumstance which at once

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modified my resolution. I took a seat in one of the corners of the room behind the cast-iron stove, in company with two or three of the neighbours, who had come to see what was going on, and I calmly asked for a measure of wine and a plate of *sauer-kraut*.

Annette nearly betrayed me.

"My God!" she exclaimed. "Is it possible?"

But an exclamation more or less in the midst of such a clamorous crowd signified absolutely nothing. Nobody took any notice of it; and while I went on eating with the best appetite I listened to the examination to which Mother Grédel was being subjected while lying helplessly in a large arm-chair, her thin hair and eyes still disordered by terror.

"What appeared to be the age of this man?" asked the bailiff.

"From forty to fifty years old, monsieur. An enormous man, with black side-locks, or brown ones—I will not speak positively as to the colour—long nose, green eyes."

"Had he no particular marks—stains on the face—scars?"

"No—I don't remember. He had only a large hammer and pistols."

"Very well; and what did he say to you?"

"He seized me by the throat, but fortunately I cried out so loudly that he became afraid, and then I defended myself with my nails. Ah monsieur! when one's life is in danger one defends oneself, monsieur."

"Nothing is more natural and legitimate, madame. Write down, Monsieur Roth, that the *sangfroid* of this good woman has been truly admirable."

And so on throughout the examination.

Annette was then questioned, who simply declared that she had been so terrified as to remember nothing.

"That will do," said the bailiff. "If any further intelligence reaches us we will return to-morrow."

Everybody went away, and I asked Mother Grédel for a bedroom for the night. She had not the least recollection of having seen me before, so completely had her brain been muddled by fear.

"Annette," she said, "show the gentleman up to the little green chamber on the third floor. I can no longer stand on my feet. Ah, good heavens! what one has to go through in this world!"

And she gave free and full vent to her tears, which did her good.

Annette, having lit a candle, conducted me to the chamber named, and when we were alone, "Ah, Kasper! Kasper!" she cried out of the simplicity of her heart, "who would ever have thought that you belonged to the band? I shall never be happy again after having loved a brigand."

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"You, too, Annette!—you too!" I cried in despair, throwing myself on to a seat. "This is more than I can bear!"

I was ready to burst into tears. But she instantly repented of her injustice, and came and threw her arms about me, crying:

"No! no!—you are not one of the band! You are too gentle for that, my good Kasper; but, for all that, you are very venturesome to have come back!"

I told her that I had been dying of cold out of doors, and that that alone had decided me. We remained for a few moments thoughtful, and then she left me, for fear of arousing the suspicions of Mother Grédel. When I was alone, after having made sure that the windows did not open on to any wall, and that the bolt of the door acted properly, I thanked the Lord for having saved me under such perilous circumstances. Then, lying down in bed, I slept profoundly.

II.

Next morning I awoke about eight o'clock. The weather was damp and dull. On drawing aside the curtain of my bed, I remarked that the snow was piled on the window-ledges; the windows were all white with it. I thought sadly of the fate of my comrades; how they must be suffering from the cold, most of all, old Brêmer and big Berthe. This idea wrung my heart.

While I was musing in this manner, a strange tumult arose out of doors. It approached the public-house, and it was not without alarm that I sprang towards a window to judge of this new peril.

The famous band was being brought to be confronted with Mistress Grédel Dick, who was unable to leave her house after the terrible emotions of the previous night. My poor companions were coming down the muddy street, between two files of police agents, and followed by an avalanche of boys, hooting and hissing like very savages. I still seem to see the frightful scene: old Brêmer manacled to his son Ludwig, then Karl and Wilfrid, and lastly, big Berthe, who walked alone, and crying in a piteous voice:

"In the name of Heaven, gentlemen—in the name of Heaven—have pity on a poor innocent harpist! I kill? I steal? Oh, is it possible!"

She wrung her hands. The others were downcast, their heads bent, and their hair hanging over their faces.

The whole of these people pressed into the dingy passage of the *Pied de Mouton*. The officers turned out all strangers, then shut the door, and the eager crowd were left outside, with feet in the snow and noses flattened against the window-panes.

The profoundest silence then reigned in the house. Being by

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this time dressed, I partly opened the door of my room to listen, and to see whether it was possible for me to escape from the house unseen.

I heard voices and persons moving about on the lower floors, convincing me that all the issues were well guarded. The door of my room opened on to the landing-place just in front of the window which the man had opened to escape from. At first I took no heed of this. But while I was standing there, I suddenly noticed that, the window being open, no snow had lodged on the lower part of the frame, and on going up to it, I perceived fresh footsteps on the wall. This discovery made me shudder. The man had returned! He returned every night perhaps! The cat, the stoat, the ferret—all seekers of living prey—have their habitual path. What a discovery! A mysterious light was making all clear to my mind.

"Oh!" I cried to myself, "if chance should have placed the murderer in my hands, my poor comrades will have been saved!"

With my eyes I followed the footmarks, which were continued with surprising clearness on to the nearest roof.

At that moment some words of the examination reached my ears. The door of the room in which the inquiry was taking place had been opened to admit air. I heard:

"Do you admit having, on the 20th of this month, participated in the murder of the high priest, Ulmet Elias?"

A few unintelligible words followed.

"Close the door, Madoc," said the bailiff, "close the door; madame is unwell."

I heard no more.

While my head was resting on the banisters a great resolution was struggling within me. "I may be able to save my comrades," I said to myself. "God will point out to me the means of giving them back to their families. If fear made me shrink from such a duty I should become their murderer. My peace of mind, my honour, would be lost for ever; I should think myself the most cowardly—the vilest of wretches!" For a considerable length of time I hesitated; but suddenly my resolution was taken. I went downstairs and penetrated into the kitchen.

"Have you never seen this watch?" said the bailiff to Mother Grédel. "Try your best to remember, madame?"

But without waiting for the answer, I advanced into the room, and with a firm voice replied:

"I have seen this watch, Mr. Bailiff, in the hands of the murderer himself. I recognise it. And, as to the assassin, I can give him up to you this evening, if you will deign to listen to me."

A deep silence was maintained around me; all present looked at

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one another in bewilderment. My poor comrades appeared to take courage.

"Who are you, monsieur?" demanded the bailiff, recovering from his surprise.

"I am the companion of these unfortunates, and I am not ashamed to own it, Mr. Bailiff, because all of them, though poor, are honest people. Not one amongst them is capable of committing the crimes imputed to them."

There was a fresh silence. Big Berthe sobbed quietly; the bailiff appeared to gird himself up.

"Where," he said, fixing his eye on me, "where do you propose to give the assassin up to us?"

"In this very place, Mr. Bailiff—in this house. To convince you, I ask but a moment's audience in private."

"Let us hear," he said, rising, and making a sign to Madoc, the chief of the secret police, to follow us, and to the others to remain where they were.

We left the room. I rapidly mounted the stairs, the others following in my steps. On reaching the third story, I showed them the footmarks in the snow.

"Those are the traces of the murderer," I said to them. "He passes this way every evening. Yesterday he came at two in the morning; he has been again during the night. He will, without doubt, come again this evening."

The bailiff and Madoc observed the footsteps for a few moments without speaking.

"And you say that those are the footprints of the murderer?" asked the chief of the police, with an air of doubt.

I then related to them the appearance of the assassin in our loft. I pointed out the window of the house into which, by the light of the moon, I had seen him escape—which Wilfrid had not seen, from having remained in bed. I confessed that accident alone had led me to observe the footprints of the preceding night.

"It's strange," muttered the bailiff, "and a great deal modifies the situation of the accused. But how do you account for the presence of the murderer in the cellar of the public-house?"

I simply informed him of all that had taken place the evening before, from the arrest of my comrades to the moment of my flight.

"That will do," he said.

And then, turning to the chief of the police, he observed:

"I must confess to you, Madoc, that the depositions against these fiddlers have never appeared to me conclusive; they were far from confirming me in the idea of their participation in these crimes. Besides,

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their papers establish, for several of them, an alibi very difficult to be disproved. Nevertheless, young man, in spite of the apparent truthfulness of the information you have given us, you must remain in our custody until the verification of the fact. Madoc, you must keep him under your eye, and take your measures accordingly."

The bailiff went downstairs meditatively, and folding his papers, without adding a word to the examination:

"Let the accused be taken back to prison," he said, casting a look of contempt at the fat landlady.

He left the house, accompanied by his secretary.

Madoc remained alone with two assistants.

"Madame," he said to the landlady, "you will preserve the strictest silence as to what has taken place. More than that, you will let this honest young man have the room he occupied the night before last."

The look and tone of Madoc admitted of no reply. Mother Grédel promised to do anything and everything required of her, so long as she was secured from the brigands.

"Don't distress yourself about *them*," replied Madoc; "we shall remain here all day and night to protect you. Attend quietly to your business, and begin by letting us have some breakfast. Young man, will you do me the honour of breakfasting with us?"

My situation did not allow me to decline this offer. I accepted.

We sat down therefore to a ham and a jug of Rhine wine. Other persons came in and took their customary drinks, provoking the confidence of Mother Grédel and Annette; but they took great care not to speak in our presence, and were extremely reserved; which was highly meritorious on their parts.

We spent the whole afternoon smoking pipes and drinking odd glasses and mugs of wine; no one paid any attention to us.

The chief of the police, in spite of his pallid face, his piercing eyes, pale lips, and eagle-beak nose, was a very good fellow after drinking. He told funny stories with spirit and facility. He tried to lay hold of little Annette as she passed him. The others laughed boisterously at everything he said. I alone remained sad and silent.

"Come, young man," he said to me laughingly, "forget your respectable grandmother's death. What the devil!—we're all mortal! Drink, and drive away these gloomy fancies."

Others mixed in our conversation, and the time thus passed in the midst of tobacco-smoke, the jingling of glasses, and the clatter of cans.

But at nine o'clock, after the visit of the watchman, everything changed its complexion. Madoc rose and said:

"Now, then, let's get to business. Fasten the door and shutters, gently. You, madame, and you, mademoiselle, go to bed."

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These three abominably tattered and seedy men had themselves much more the appearance of brigands than of guardians of law and order. They drew from their trowsers iron rods, armed at the end with a ball of lead. Brigadier Madoc tapped on the pocket of his overcoat to assure himself of the presence of a pistol. A moment afterwards he drew it out to put a cap on it.

All this was done quite coolly. Finally the chief directed me to lead them up to my loft.

We mounted the stairs.

On reaching the den, where little Annette had been so careful as to light a fire, Madoc, swearing between his teeth, immediately threw water over the charcoal; then, pointing to the mattress, he said to me:

"If you are inclined, you can go to sleep."

He then seated himself with his acolytes at the end of the room, near the wall, and blew out the candle.

I lay down, inwardly praying to the Lord to send the assassin.

The silence, after midnight, became so profound that one might almost have doubted that three men were there, open-eyed, and attentive to the least sound, as hunters lying in wait for some wild beast. The hours passed slowly, slowly. I did not sleep. A thousand terrible ideas came into my head. I heard the clock strike one—two; still nothing appeared.

At three o'clock one of the police officers stirred—I thought the man had arrived—but all again became still. I began to think that Madoc would take me for an impostor, that he would be terribly angry, that he would maltreat me next day, and that, far from having saved my companions, I should be chained with them.

After three o'clock the time appeared to fly with extreme rapidity; I could have wished that the night would last for ever, so as at least to leave me a ray of hope.

As I was thus, for the thousandth time, sifting these ideas, suddenly, without my having heard the least noise, the window was pushed open—two eyes glittered in the opening—nothing stirred in the loft.

"The others are asleep," I said to myself.

The head still remained there—attentive. One might have said the scoundrel suspected something. Oh! how my heart galloped! how the blood coursed through my veins, while the cold perspiration covered my face! I no longer breathed.

Several minutes passed in this manner; then, suddenly, the man appeared to decide, and dropped into the loft with the same precaution as on the previous night.

At the same moment a terrible cry—a cry, short, thrilling, rang out:

"We have him!"

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Then the whole house was filled with uproar—exclamations, stampings, hoarse clamours, freezing me with terror. The man roared, the others panted; then there was a fall, as if the floor was being crashed through; after that I only heard the grinding of teeth and the rattle of manacles.

"Light!" cried the terrible Madoc.

And, while the sulphur flamed, casting its ghastly blue light throughout the room, I vaguely distinguished the police agents sitting on the man in shirt sleeves; one held his throat, the other pressed his knees into the villain's chest; Madoc closed the handcuffs on his wrists with a force enough to have broken the bones. The man seemed helpless; one only of his big legs, bare from the knee to the ankle, was raised from time to time, and struck against the floor with a convulsive movement; his eyes were literally starting from his head, and a bloody froth was oozing from his lips.

I had scarcely lit the candle before an exclamation of surprise broke from the police agents:

"Our Dean!"

All three rose, and I saw them look at each other, pale with terror.

The bloodshot eye of the murderer turned towards Madoc. He tried to speak, but it was some seconds before I heard him murmur:

"What a dream!—my God, what a dream!"

I had gone close to look at him. It was he—the man who had given us such good advice on the road to Heidelberg. Perhaps he had had a presentiment that we should be the cause of his destruction; people sometimes have these terrible presentiments. As he no longer moved, and a streak of blood was stealing along the dusty floor, Madoc, recovered from his surprise, tore open his shirt; he then saw that he had stabbed himself to the heart with his large knife.

"Aha!" cried Madoc with a dark smile. "Master Dean has diddled the gallows. He knew when he was well off! All of you stop here while I go and inform the bailiff."

Picking up his hat, which had fallen off in the struggle, he went out without saying another word.

I remained with the two police agents in front of the corpse.

By eight o'clock in the morning all Heidelberg had learned the great news. It was an event in the country. Daniel Van den Berg, Dean of the Drapers, had enjoyed a fortune and consideration so firmly established, that numbers absolutely refused to believe in the abominable instincts by which he had been overcome.

These events were discussed in a thousand different ways. Some said that the rich Dean was a sleep-walker, and consequently irresponsible for his actions; others that he was a murderer for love of

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blood, having no serious interest in the committal of such crimes. Perhaps he was both the one and the other. It is an incontestable fact that the moral being, the will, the soul—it matters little what it is called—exists no longer in the somnambulist. Now, the animal, abandoned to itself, naturally submits to the impulsion of its pacific or sanguinary instincts; and the thick-set face of Daniel Van den Berg, his flat head, swelling out behind the ears, his long bristling moustaches, his green eyes, all proved that he, unfortunately, belonged to the cat species—a terrible race, that kill for the mere pleasure of killing.

However that may be, my companions were set at liberty. For a fortnight Annette was talked of as a model of devotion. She was even asked in marriage by the son of Burgomaster Trungott, a romantic young gentleman who was the plague of his family. I hastened back to the Black Forest, where, from that time, I fulfilled the functions of *chef d'orchestre* at the *boushon* of the Sabre-Vert, on the road to Tubingue. If you happen to pass that way and my story has interested you, come and see me. We'll empty two or three bottles together, and I'll tell you some things that will make your hair stand on end.

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Fashion.

"I assure you, Madam, that it is the Fashion—*everybody wears it!*"

"My love, it is atrociously vulgar—*everybody wears it!*"

Such are the formulas in which Queen Fashion gives her royal assent (by commission) to the acts of her ministers, and repeals them when their time comes. All things feminine—from a parasol to a shoe—have their day in which everybody wears them; but then, you know, there are everybodies who are somebodies, and everybodies who are nobodies. As long as the somebodies wear it (whatever it may be) it is elegant, and lovely, and proper. The moment that the nobodies get it, it is entirely the reverse. To be vulgar (in the primary sense of the word) amongst the ten thousands is to be fashionable. To be fashionable amongst the millions is to be vulgar, in its other meaning.

Queen Fashion is an absolute monarch. She will give no reasons for her decrees. "*Sic volo, sic jubeo*" is her motto. She pays no regard to the convenience or physical condition of her votaries. She legislates as though they were all cast in one mould, and were in stature and complexion all alike. What artists call harmony in colour and design, is ignored by her. You may take up one of her works, and, judging it by the ordinary standards of utility and taste, prove it to be useless as a garment, and shocking to the educated eye as an ornament. The wife of your bosom will hearken to you more or less patiently, and crush you to the earth at the end by the simple statement, "My dear, *it is the fashion!*" So long as this can be said, the subject of your discussion is invulnerable. The comic press may make fun of it; serious writers may assail it; the pulpit may do its best, and philosophers their worst, against it—all in vain. One fine morning, some milliner in the cabinet of Queen Fashion lifts her bodkin, and—hey, presto! it is gone.

There was a time when the leading book of fashions in this realm was its statutes at large. What the somebodies should wear, and the nobodies might not aspire to, was laid down in Acts of Parliament. King, Lords, and Commons gravely enacted what sort of men might not wear long toes to their shoes; with what fur merchants might trim their gowns, and of what stuffs their wives' apparel might be made. The wickedness of the age having shown itself in edgings of jerkins and so forth, "cut or stamped out in vaine devyses, as escalopes and the lyke," such vanities were made illegal. The statutes of

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the University of Oxford contain some very quaint rules as to what its *alumni* might not wear. Every nation has had its Sumptuary Laws, and sooner or later Queen Fashion has grown strong enough to snap her fingers at them. Her triumph is the vindication of the voluntary system, and should be a guide and warning to statesmen of the meddle-muddle or plunder-blunder schools. With the law on her side, and my Lords the King's Justices to back her up, she was a small power; left to herself, she is supreme. She makes people extravagant, she makes them frivolous, she makes them discontented. She is stupid, wayward, inconsistent with herself, arbitrary, insincere, and treacherous. She deals with persons as well as things, and trifles with reputations—giving unearned fame here, and denying merit a crust there—as lightly as she changes the colour of a ribbon or the set of a skirt. She has all the bad qualities of the worst sort of tyrant, yet we not only obey but worship her.

She has done some good. Having laughed the old sumptuary laws out of court, she set herself the task of breaking up those rigid lines of demarcation which custom drew between class and class, trade and trade. In those times, "tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor," and professors of those other occupations which small boys count on their waistcoat buttons, wore a distinctive garb—a livery of their order—which kept a man "in his place," and was a badge of moral, and sometimes of physical, slavery. Very pretty and picturesque it was, no doubt, to see Will Armourer, and Peter Carpenter, and Mollie Chambermaid, and so on, in uniform. A busy street was a gayer sight then than it is now—the merchants in their robes, the divines in wig and cassock, the nobles brave in gold and steel. But Queen Fashion cares little for the pretty and the picturesque; her ideal is uniformity. And just as the great Napoleon prized himself upon his school system, under which fifty thousand French boys, dispersed in a thousand schools all over France, should be construing the same passage of Cæsar at the same moment on any given day, so it is Fashion's glory to know that on any night of "the season" everybody who is anybody will cast (so to speak) himself or herself in one mould, however much it may pinch or misfit, and have but one desire, *i.e.* to be like each other.

To produce uniformity, Queen Fashion had to help our grandfathers over a serious difficulty. A passage in the Church Catechism was in the way. People were to be content in the state of life into which they were called; so blacksmiths were to beget blacksmiths, and ploughmen, ploughmen, until the end of time. How they got new bishops in those days has always been a puzzle to me, for surely the priest who preached this sort of "content" should have practised it? The whole duty of (working) man was to go to church, and bob to the squire. To "ape your betters"—in other words, to improve

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your condition—was a crime. I will not pretend that a desire to put on better clothes was the mainspring of the movement which changed all this, but it greased the wheels with admirable assiduity and profusion. The people wanted better chances, better lives, a better state of freedom; and the outward and visible sign that these were being gained was the appearance of better clothes and the disappearance of class liveries. If I ever have a pulpit of my own, I will preach a sermon in praise of "vanities." I will discourse upon the beauty of discontent. I will teach my flock before what sort of "betters" they are to hold themselves "lowly and reverently," and I am afraid my definition will not be strictly orthodox. But I will have no shams, no veneering, no *looking*, without *being*, smarter than yesterday. The shop-boy with his two-and-sixpenny diamond studs, and his giggling companion in her dirty finery, shall catch it. This sort of thing is the scum (and there is scum on molten gold) of a wholesome brew. The system which set a mark upon men that caused them to be cringed to at one moment, and to cringe the next, had nothing wholesome in it.

The uniformity of the outward man and woman produced by Fashion has had a good deal, I fancy, to do in producing that icy reserve for which the present generation of English people are celebrated. In those good old times, you knew what a man was by what he wore. If he was your superior—as times went—you might respectfully give him good-day, or, if invited, enter into conversation with him; and neither of you would lose any self-respect. Now, everybody is alike. Your companion in a railway carriage, the man who dines at your side at the *table d'hôte* may be a duke or a dustman, a millionaire banker, or a defaulting bankrupt, for all that you can tell. With ladies, the formation of casual acquaintances is fraught with grave perils. Ballet-girls have been mistaken for foreign princesses, and real duchesses entertained (as angels may sometimes be) unknown. Nevertheless, the dear creatures gush into companionship with each other, and we, their lords, not unfrequently profit by the result. That senseless line of deportment which amongst men of the period is called "good form" has, thank goodness! not been imitated by gentlewomen. Your daughters and mine, my good sir, meeting for the first time on neutral ground—on the croquet-lawn of a mutual friend, for example—may without impropriety open an acquaintance by the offer and acceptance of some little feminine courtesy—a seat, a fan, the adjustment of a rebellious but unseen bow, the restoration of a fallen handkerchief, and so on. If there be a baby attached to either party, a general sororising is as inevitable as death. As a rule, ladies are civil amongst themselves. If they tread on each other's dress they smile and *say* it is of no consequence, whatever they may feel. With men

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it is wholly different. Fashion enacts that man must not only be rude, but absolutely brutal to his unintroduced brethren; and he calls this "Good Form!" Suppose our sons to encounter each other under the same circumstances as above supposed anent their sisters, and my Tom, not up to "good form," were to pick up your Harry's glove, or tell him that his necktie was disarranged—what would follow? He would freeze him with a "stony stare," and, having joined his friends, would yawn, "Infernal cad! came and spoke to me." After this my boy would learn that it is not fashionable amongst his kind to be civil, and govern himself accordingly. Now, had your Mary done the like for my Grace, she would have been recompensed with a bright smile and a "thank you so much;" and, maybe, the two would be sworn friends before they parted. Discourtesy does not run in our families. When we were young, what is now known as "*good form*" was called *bad manners*. We do not scowl at each other, and resent the slightest civility as an insult. How is it, then, that our sons are awkward cubs, and our daughters graceful and gracious girls?

The explanation is, that in all matters where success depends upon tact, &c., which are to be gained by being pleased or pleasing, the (so-called) weaker sex beat their lords and masters badly. Their good sense revolts against the absurdity of treating an equal with rudeness because no one has yet said, "Miss Brown, Miss White!—Miss White, Miss Brown!" Both sides know that they are in no way compromised by the offer or acceptance of a civility. It may lead to something—it can very easily be stripped of all significance, and bear no consequences whatever. With the sweetest possible smile, and in the most decorous manner, woman can hint to woman that this latter conclusion is to prevail. There is no scowling, no vulgar turning of backs, no chatter of the "'fernal cad!" description. The lancet—not the bludgeon—is used to give the "cut." In all ranks, except perhaps the very first, the women take a higher polish than the men. Look at your wife's maid, for example, how nicely she is dressed!—what good manners she has! And now turn to her brother, or his friend, the young man who wants her to help him to keep that crockery shop. Set Poole himself to work in his behalf; hat him, glove him, boot him of the best, and yet Tottenham Court Road will shine out all over him.

Fashion, like history, repeats herself. She also contradicts herself. Some years ago, a pretty little girl, after a wondering examination of a portrait of her grandmother, asked if people *really* went about like that; and upon being informed that they actually did, laughed, and said what a pack of guys they must have been! They were guys (in her light) because they wore their hair drawn up from their temples, and piled on the top of their heads; because they had square necks

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to their dresses; because their skirts were scanty in front and bunched up behind; and because they wore high-heeled shoes! The dear little critic was a "guy" herself before she went to her first ball!

At the time she thus criticised, ladies expanded an ample skirt over a sort of wire cage, which took every particle of grace out of the fall of that garment, and, swaggering with their motion, gave the idea that they were walking in a silk-clad water-butt with the bottom knocked out. Thus dressed, the getting in and out of carriages, climbing stiles, gathering shells on ocean's shore, and any other action which displaced the cage, was fraught with disclosures very amusing, no doubt, to uninterested spectators, but decidedly objectionable in the eyes of husbands and papas. I suppose there never yet was any fashion so fiercely attacked, so universally abused (by men) than crinoline. The parties principally interested never shrinked; on the contrary, their hoops expanded. Gentlemen, they pleaded, defended *their* ugly fashions because they pretended them to be comfortable. Well, crinoline was not ugly. They denied that; but even if it were, *it was comfortable*. There! It distributed the weight of their robes. Only let them (the gentlemen) try what it was to have a lot of heavy silk dragging against their knees! Crinoline was worn for comfort. Now then? Besides, a wide, flowing train was so elegant! It would never go out. Narrow skirts would never come in—*never*, never, NEVER! Well, we all know how crinoline collapsed, and what took its place. Hair-powder has come back, chatelaines are in for the third time, dress gloves are growing up the arm, button by button, till I expect to see them with tops (like those of the exploded wellington boot) up to the elbow, as in the days of my youth. All this argues paucity of invention, and leads us to inquire who are the leaders who ring these changes.

Queen Fashion was always democratic. She never depended upon kings or princes to keep her altar-fires alight. Her high-priests were often of humble origin. Plain Mr. Brummel could punish the "First Gentleman of Europe" by changing a Fashion. He had made people swathe their necks up to the ears in thick folds of muslin so that the Regent might hide the scars which disfigured his glands. When they quarrelled, the Beau turned down his collar, and exposed his throat. An attempt recently made, under princely auspices, to reform gentlemen's evening dress failed utterly; but twenty-five years ago, a simple undergraduate of Oxford revolutionised our morning attire. With the ladies, beauty and brains have been the qualification for leadership. Mere rank had to follow. As long as Queen Fashion's army was a comparatively small one, those entitled to be leaders stood prominently forward, and were elected by acclaim, just as in the olden times the biggest and fiercest savages in the tribe

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were chosen as its chiefs. When the forces increased—when their wants became greater, and their evolutions more complicated—educated generals were naturally required. The milliners and dressmakers lead the Fashion now. There are ladies in Paris who are supposed to dictate what is to be "worn." They dictate simply what the milliners and dressmakers have resolved upon, and are very elegant walking, riding, or lounging advertisements of what *Madame Entelle* and Mr. Chose (for millinery may be masculine now) have decided is to be the Fashion. Do you suppose that Mdlle. de la Chic pays for those bewildering dresses in which she looks so charming? Or that the bill is ever sent in to yonder proud beauty, around whose chariot-wheels so many of our golden youth are congregated as she halts in a shady corner off "the drive?" The arrangement with Mdlle. de la Chic is business-like and straightforward—so many dresses, so many puffs. The bargain which attires the other lady splendidly for nothing a year has no existence in fact. Pen never wrote—tongue never whispered it. This other lady is very beautiful, very vain, and, for her rank, very poor. She is one of those who can carry off strange raiment, and stamp it at once as the Fashion. Ladies form themselves upon her. Those who are of her acquaintance beg and pray for what sporting men would call a "tip" as to what new thing is coming out. Outsiders watch for her appearance at opera, promenade, or ball, to see if there be anything to add or reject, and set their wardrobes by hers, as watches are set by the Horse Guards' clock. Is it to be wondered at that her dressmaker, her milliner, her goldsmith, &c., &c., &c., should be run after? Other people's bills go in, but hers do not. What would you? Bills, when duly delivered, often escape our attention. Women of fashion forget all about these "little accounts," even when they are reposing in the pigeon-holes of their davenports. How, then, can you possibly expect a lady to bear in mind that an account has *not* been sent in? It will be delivered some day, or a delicate hint will be given that the advertisement is to be withdrawn.

This system is not without its advantages. We live too fast in these times to sit down and invent for ourselves; and once granted that we are to take our taste from the shop, we must not complain of its quality. We must not complain—having relegated our judgment into the hands of a score or so of competing tradespeople—that the extravagant and the startling prevail. On the other hand, the reflection is forced upon such of us as take the trouble to think, that the female form divine would, perhaps, have its outlines more modestly draped if ladies' fashions had been designed by gentlewomen.

I can remember the time when the slightest tinge of paint upon a young woman's face was regarded as evidence to connect her with a class which was not so much noticed then as now. The mothers of

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fogies such as he who proses at present did not rub skirts with Mdlle. de la Chic in the Park or the crushroom, nor did they copy her from the stage. Ladies of the great world would not have satin boots because Vestris wore them in those Olympic revels of which the burlesque of the period is the degenerate offspring. In comparison with the burlesque of the period the gayest of the Olympic revels was propriety itself—it was elegant and witty, that was all. A similar comparison may be drawn between the *stage* behaviour, at any rate, of the ladies engaged in these performances respectively. But you may be sure that if, in this year of grace, some enterprising son of Crispin were to invent a novel style of *chaussure* for Miss Kitty Rosepink, of the Royal Breakdown Theatre, it would be "the rage" in a fortnight. To explain this phenomenon one has to skate over rather thin ice. Women dress for two reasons: First, to please the men; and, second, to displease each other. They have been permitted, or rather have permitted themselves, to observe that a class which their grandmothers utterly ignored is pleasing to men, and have copied their outward signs of attraction. Farther than this I do not propose to go. It is far enough. Having gone to the shop for your taste, you go to the footlights for your complexion! Bismuth and belladonna are on your dressing-tables. Cream of beauty and bloom of roses may be inquired for in Belgravia without a blush. To this extreme Fashion has led you gradually. Step by step you have got over the good old contempt in which false things were held when first our Sovereign Lady purged her court and country of the foulness which the last George bred and fostered in them. Fashion has excused false trinkets, false hair, false light in the eyes, false tints upon the flesh. Do you think it will end thus? Can you hope that these things are only skin deep? Have you no fear lest they may soak inwards and produce upon the mind the same effect which they work upon the body? One more question, and I have done. Does this sort of thing pay? You can read the answer in the manners and literature of the day. Sensualism reigns supreme. Respect for purity has gone out of Fashion.

For this, I have heard it urged, the men are to blame. They showed what pleased them, and have no right to complain that it was copied. There is some justice in such a plea if we admit that the one sex is under an obligation to please the other, irrespective of the quality of the pleasure involved. This cannot be admitted. We owe the civilisation of the world—the very foundations of what we call society—to an opposite principle. The ladies of the great world had it in their power to crush the *demi-monde* before it became an institution. They could have drawn a moral cordon around certain suburban districts which would have isolated them like so

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many Ghettos, and by *continuing* the social law which enacted that a man who escorted or saluted one who could not be presented to his friend's sisters in places to which ladies could properly resort was guilty of an ungentlemanly act, they would soon have relegated the admirers of Anonyma to the groves which she adorned, and secured the honour of their non-appearance in other drawing-rooms. This done, Anonyma would have stayed at home; but it was not done, and so she set the Fashion.

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Beatrice's Dream.

"But my church does *not* hold that all you heretics will be eternally damned if you are conscientious," quoth my Roman Catholic brother Frank, in answer to something I had said.

"Don't it?" snapped I; "Then all I can say is that your church of the present day holds a doctrine on this subject diametrically opposed to that held, preached, and written by all the fathers of the church, without, as far as I can remember, a single exception. Either the views of the early church were right, and yours are wrong, or vice versâ. How your church can lay a claim to infallibility, whilst avowing such sweeping changes in doctrine, is a puzzle to anybody outside her pale."

"The church does not *change*," says Frank with great dignity and some anger, "but she *developes*. The——"

"Oh, time-honoured, high-sounding, meaningless evasion," laugh I, somewhat scornfully; "I am almost glad to hear once more thine old familiar voice. My dear Frank, you can't call the doctrine that "heretics, if conscientious, are not doomed to eternal damnation" a legitimate development of, and not a change from, the doctrine that 'all heretics are damned eternally;' you can't call the doctrine that 'it is wrong to persecute heretics,' a legitimate development of, and not a change from, the doctrine that 'it is right to persecute heretics.' Never mind, I am eager for further information on the subject of heresy. I wish you would give me a clear description of the unfortunate unconscientious heretic who *is* going to be damned."

"A man who, not being ignorant of the truth, wilfully rejects it," says Frank, with a bold candour, born of irritation and impatience.

"In plain English, then, your unconscientious heretic who is going to be damned, is a man who wilfully disbelieves in something he knows to be true; such a rare animal, out of lunatic asylums, I should think, that I really can't see why your church should make such a fuss about him."

"My worthy soul, the desire to whittle away and soften down narrow and repulsive doctrines is laudable in the extreme; but with the burden of an infallible church on your back, you will probably find all such attempts end in a pit of nonsense or inconsistency."

Frank flushed red with anger, and would probably have retorted with some sharpness, had not my second sister, Beatrice, with a kind

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laugh on her face, laid one hand across his mouth, whilst with the other she pinched me, the sinner, gently in the ear; and such was the magic of this young woman's touch, that the wrath died out of Frank's face, like frost under a warm sunbeam, and my smile, from having been intensely disagreeable, became positively pleasant.

We had been indulging in a theological discussion (aroused by the controversy concerning Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet) which had degenerated into a rather hot and acrimonious squabble, as religious discussions generally do, for the very simple reason that people's religious opinions make greater pretensions to certainty on less evidence than any other opinions, and consequently are proportionately more exasperating to attack or defend. Intolerable pretensions are forced upon you; may be—though I hardly like to insinuate it—you have a few *rather* vulnerable points to defend, and you always feel that you have little or no chance of an impartial hearing and judgment; and so, gentle reader, depend upon it, if you have the smallest particle of bile in your composition, a religious discussion will bring it out as though it were a moral blister.

The rather good-looking, rather commonplace-looking girl, sitting by the fire in an arm-chair, is our eldest sister, Hester. She affects high church views, but detests the Roman church like the veriest Evangelical; but she hates and despises what she calls 'infidelity' with a bitterness that no Ultramontane could surpass; she is a tight-rope dancer in the thinking line, believing in no safety an inch to the right hand or to the left; she is pretending to read a book, and looking rather dignified, and extremely sulky, for she 'got herself foughten,' and retired at an early period of the discussion, Frank and I having combined to destroy the Anglican before turning our attention to the annihiliation of each other.

Against the mantlepiece leans Frank, ætat 28, a Catholic, and—if I may be allowed to hint at differences of opinion in the one Church—a Newmanite among Catholics. A wonderfully handsome fellow, truly, with his great wondering thoughtful eyes, broad high forehead, and delicate mouth. A thought weak, say you? Well, perhaps, in a way, and yet there are capabilities both of sense and of martyrdom in that face.

I wish I could describe Beatrix, the girl standing by his side, but you can seldom paint, much less write, a beautiful expression in a human countenance, and she has such an expression that I scorn to tell you the colour of her hair and eyes, and the shape of her nose, in the pretence of describing her. And what shall I say of this expression? I can but tell you what it seems to show me. It seems to tell me of a perfect purity, of a refined spiritual intellectualness; yet in the purity no shade of primness, nor in the intellectualness one thought of contempt for people or things. All seems blended

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with a loving, laughing, pitying humanity, warming and brightening everything she looks upon like a gleam of sunshine, and her face tells no lies of her. In thought and opinion her range is wide indeed, but all the hardness, irreverence, indifference, bitterness, or conceit, which so often accompany intellectual independence, are connected in her by her reverential holiness and depth of soul, while that very earnest holiness and depth, which, by itself, might degenerate into fanatical wrongheadedness, is tempered, guided, and beautified by the power and freedom of her mind.

Such is Beatrice, a rare type of mind, perhaps, but commoner in our age than in any past one, because it is the fruit—the good fruit—of the peculiar state of thought and knowledge in our time; would that it produced more like this and fewer like——

The last member of the family party awaiting description is myself. When I publish my autobiography, in the days of my dotage, I promise you a full and lengthy analysis of my dear virtues and still dearer faults; for the present let it suffice that I am a sceptic in theological matters, and less of a mere scoffer than many are kind enough to think me.

In a family composed of such materials, it is not to be wondered at that disagreements about religion were constant, and occasionally warm.

"Oh!" said Beatrix to me, one day, "When those above, who know (if there are any such), look down upon the children of men, and see them defending and contradicting, with the utmost confidence, opinions, the reasonable proof or disproof of which are utterly beyond the powers of human intellect and investigation, I wonder if they laugh or cry."

"Well, well," answered I, with the qualified optimism of a genuine sceptic, "these discussions do good in a way, and at least teach a good lesson, for foolish claims to infallibility and intolerance are questioned and scouted by foolish pretenders to infallibility and intolerance, and so the demon of infallibility and intolerance cuts his throat with his own weapons. The greatest bigot learns something by being thoroughly disagreed with, and if he doesn't learn anything the looker-on or listener does."

The row that ended with the beginning of this chapter was much like all others of the sort; old attacks, true or false, or both, old defences and evasions, true, or false, or both, reiterated wearily and exasperatingly again and again—till one might almost doubt whether man was after all a reasoning animal—ending at last in nothing but obstinacy and ill-temper.

Hester, according to her rule and nature, entered into battle aggressive and uncompromising at all points, but Frank and I really meant to be reasonable and persuasive, until I became irritated at his

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groundless assumptions, and he, irritated at my contemptuous treatment of them, when he sought refuge in disingenuousness and dogmatism, and I in that sarcastico-reasonable method which has generated in so many of my friends a burning desire to take me by both ears and rattle my head against the wall.

"Do you remember," said Beatrix the peacemaker, with a half laugh on her face, "a tremendous argument two or three months ago, when Hester tried to show, by analogy, that the pope was Antichrist, and Frank argued that Rationalism was Antichrist, and you contemptuously denied poor Antichrist's right to any existence at all?"

No answer, for the first two were a wee bit ashamed of having vehemently committed themselves to such opinions out of sheer pugnacity.

"Well," continued Beatrix, "the night after that I had a most extraordinary dream. Of course, like most dreams, it was incomplete and vague, and its details won't bear criticism; but it was so vivid, and, as dreams go, so reasonable, that it made a lasting impression on my mind. I will tell it you if you like."

We all gathered round the fire, and Beatrix, after gazing in silence for a moment at the glowing embers, with her head between her hands, began as follows:—

"I dreamt it was the judgment day. With that strange unnaturalness of feeling that is so often such a quaint characteristic of dreams, I was not in the least frightened, pleased, astonished, or interested about myself. I cannot tell you whether I was material or not. I did not even wonder where I was or how I got there.

"I was sitting on a great pinnacle of rock half-way up the side of an enormous mountain. Far, far away above my head it ended in one solitary peak, above which was a glorious halo of golden light, like a brilliant sunset on a distant horizon, and this I knew to be the gates of Heaven.

"At the foot of the mountain was a vast gloomy plain, stretching away till hidden in darkness as far as I could see, and from this plain rose a low, strange murmur as of millions of voices, whilst I could dimly make out great hosts of men looking like gigantic reptiles, crawling slowly but steadily out of the darkness of the plain, and winding their way towards the foot of the mountain.

* * * * * * *

"They had reached me, and I was amongst them. Great hosts of men, with their faces old and young, clever and stupid, careworn and fresh, highborn and lowly, all filled with a wild tumult of hope, showing itself in different modes according to their characters, whilst all their countless eyes were fixed strainingly, eagerly,

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piteously, lovingly, adoringly upon the golden goal towards which they were marching. Cries of exultation and victory, grand and piteous histories of sufferings borne and praises of God, rent the air in every language under Heaven. And I wandered about among the hosts in a mad ecstasy of delight, for it was glorious to see the hope and the peace of those whose hearts had been broken in the world by sorrow and pain.

"In all these hosts there was much likeness, much the same characters, much the same idea of duty, and much the same hope; yet even the most like never mixed for a moment—nay, they scrupulously avoided doing so, and when two hosts approached, some looked so full of hate, that if they had not been so eager to reach the gates of Heaven, I believe they would have stopped and fought, while others contented themselves with bitter and contemptuous looks, while others were pitiful, and hoped that, perhaps, after all, the other hosts would be shown mercy.

"And when I found that each of these hosts of men was a religion, great or small, and that, with a few exceptions, each was assured of its reward and salvation, but doubted or denied the safety of all the others, my joy was changed to a great terror at the thought of the ghastly disappointment and heartbreaking misery that would ensue, if what any of them believed turned out to be wholly true.

"But they did not all think in this way, for soon I saw a small host who struck me as being somewhat different from the rest. They plodded steadily and quietly along, with more resolution than enthusiasm, and a quiet patience and serenity, rather than a tumult of hope upon their faces. Some of them, indeed, looked sad, weary, and hopeless.

"All the hosts seemed to make common cause to hate and vilify this little band, and not without cause, for they were a sect of rulers who had questioned the infallibility of the human intellect, and its power, whilst on earth, to know supernatural things. But I pitied these men, the only doubters in such a sea of confidence and certainty. For good or for ill they had done their work in the world without reward, or hope, or idea of reward, and now were marching quietly up with the rest to accept silently what might be sent them, and, perhaps, to know at last what they had doubted so long in their weary time of trial.

"And as the hosts kept on steadily up the hill, I wandered from one to another, seeing many nations, and the beauty in all the faces was a wonder to me, and a terror when I thought of what might come.

"And at last they gained the summit of the mountain, so wide was it that it might have supported the whole earth, and as each host, one after the other, reached the level ground, all, with one accord, cast their arms and faces up towards the glorious light above them and

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cried to their God to open the gates of heaven to His own followers. But there was no voice and no sign.

"Then the wild tumult, if possible, increased in intensity, while the saints and the prophets and the sages of each creed implored their God, both directly, and in the name of His teachers and expounders, to receive His own. But there was no voice and no sign.

"And still the tumult kept on. Days and weeks seemed to pass away. The faces and voices of some were still lit with the same energy, and something of the same hope, for their faith was very great; they felt sure that their God was but testing them, and would receive them at last if they trusted Him, and were true to Him; but others doubted, and sickened, and despaired, for there was no voice and no sign.

"Oh, it was terrible to see the good, the wise, the brave, and the strong utterly cowed and broken when it was gradually forced upon them that that in which they trusted was but a dream or a mistake after all. More terrible still, in my eyes, to see the simple, the gentle, the lowly, the loving, who had accepted their creed on earth as they found it, reverently and humbly, without doubt, and lived by it and for it, and had borne all suffering meekly in the hope of the reward eternal, sinking silently into a hopeless sadness.

"Weeks and months passed away, and the voices grew fewer and fainter day by day, till at last they ceased, and the silence of hopeless despair fell upon all the people of the earth. For there was no voice and no sign.

"And soon the hosts began to break up, and many wandered listlessly about the dreary mountain, while others lay on their faces, as though dead, and grieved in silence.

"The members of the different hosts mixed together freely enough now. They had a common woe to humble them and draw their hearts together, and from this they began at last to know that they had a common failing too. For when the first great horror of despair had passed away, the stronger and braver souls of all creeds went about among the rest, comforting and consoling all those who would receive consolation. And out of this came at last amongst all men a great love for each other, such as never had been seen on earth. The sorrow and the wailing did not cease, but tenderness and humility grew up with them.

"Then at last rose one man, of what creed it matters not, since all creeds were humbled alike now, and cried 'Fools! and worse than fools that we have been! We ourselves made an image of ourselves, and called it God, and bowed down and worshipped it. Our thoughts we called God's thoughts; our truth, God's truth; our right, God's right; our wishes, God's wishes. We judged our neighbour, and said the judgment was God's; we took books, and said the writing was

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God's. We all claimed to know God, and all alike created Him according to our fancy.'

"And when these words were spoken, a great wailing cry of conviction, of remorse, and of despair went up from all the people, and not in separate hosts, as before, but all in one great mass, with joined hands and circling arms, they bowed down and humbled themselves in silence before the unknown God. And then came one short burst of tumultuous joy, and all alike were swept up and disappeared in an ocean of glorious light.

"And so I woke up and heard you two boys still wrangling about faith in the room below."

Hester lights a candle and stalks off silently to bed. This sort of thought is not at all in her line. She is one of those people, not so very rare either, whose belief in their infallible power to see and hold the exact truth is walled in and protected by an intense narrowness or blindness of intellect—a stolid, unreasoning stupidity, against which the gods themselves are powerless.

"It rather amuses me," remarked Frank quietly, "to observe that while the teaching of your dream is a direct attack on what you call anthropomorphism, yet the mainspring of it, after all, is an anthropomorphic dislike to see attributed to God actions inconsistent with human notions of justice."

"That is an acute criticism," answered Beatrix, smiling, "but not quite a fair one. That there is a touch of anthropomorphism somewhere about the dream, I don't deny, simply because all our knowledge being relative, it is impossible to form any conception of such an idea as God, or such a subject as His judgments, without being guilty of it —more than than that I deny."

After a pause Frank spoke again:

"Of course, believing as I do—believing implicitly, and with my whole nature, that God has not left man without a guide to point the way to better things than his own sinful soul and the phenomena of a dumb and inscrutable nature; believing as I do, that God has revealed such truth as we are able to receive, correct and trustworthy as far as it goes, to His church, within whose pale is certainly attainable salvation, and believing that those without the pale are in truth, in so far as in morals or doctrine they happen to coincide with the church, and in error, in so far as they disagree—believing these things, not as debateable theories, but indestructable truths, I cannot well discuss the probability or possibility of the truth of Beatrix's dream.

"I would rather try to point out to you both the perniciousness of its doctrine. What a grand sound have breadth, tolerance, humility, liberality of thought and opinion. What good things they are, too, up to the right point, and used on the right objects. Carry them too

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far, and what do they lead to? The most absurd, the most useless, the most soul-killing, energy-killing, evil-justifying, devilish, miserable form of thought in the world—a thorough-going scepticism. What would the world be like if men believed, and had believed for ages past, in the philosophy justified in Beatrix's dream, i.e., believed, and had believed for ages past, that in this world there is no certain knowledge of God's relations to man, or His doctrines in morals, His love of righteousness and hatred of sin? How would the great demons of sloth, and immorality, and tyranny ever have been fought and overcome by men who were not certain that God was on their side? What would Beatrix, and Ralph, and Frank—what would the whole world be like now if such a philosophy had governed it? what will it be like in the future if such doctrines gain strength? How are men to fight nobly and unselfishly, without feeling positive that they have a cause, and that cause is certainly right?"

"They would have causes still," answered Beatrix; "the only difference would be, that they would look upon them naturally, and not supernaturally, humanly, and not superhumanly, relatively, and not absolutely true."

As Frank evidently didn't think this all-important distinction worth an answer, I got up, and pacing up and down the room in my restless fashion, spoke in this wise:—

"Grant you such a belief might have been useless and despairing in the past, with the extent of general knowledge of God's universe and its laws then prevalent; grant you that it may be useless and despairing to many even now; but why assume that in the great pregnant future men will never be content to do what seems, humanly speaking, right, according to the best of the natural lights God has given them, without claiming the authority of a special supernatural infallible revelation?

"Why do you assume that the discovery that man's knowledge of right and wrong is only relative, gained by natural experience, personal and hereditary, like any other knowledge, and not a special, supernatural, infallible revelation from the Creator, will stop men from doing that which is right, and eschewing that which is evil? They follow the lower sorts of wisdom without requiring any such extraordinary affirmation of their absolute truth; why should they not, in time, as their minds become widened and their knowledge increased, follow the higher in the same way?

"On what grounds do you take such a despairing view of the progress of humanity as to justify you in assuming that men will never learn and follow moral laws, without claiming in support of them revelations, all of which, with one exception, you yourself hold have no true existence? Are the laws of duty and virtue never to be able to stand on their own merits? Why, you and all other religious

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folk preach and illustrate that they can and do every day, by way of a proof of their being a special divine revelation.

"How, then, can you think it impossible that men should learn to follow the laws of morality without claiming for them a *more* divine origin than any other part of creation?

"Mind you, I am not denying that a belief in their supernatural character had, and has, an enormous power to make men follow them. I only say that the loss of that belief will not, and does not, necessarily make such laws useless to, and powerless over mankind; and that, therefore, a religion of morality making no claims to supernatural knowledge or authority, cannot be called an impossibility in the future—nay, has found root in many a mind in the present day.

"There is nothing, after all, so very wild and chimerical in this much sneered-at idea, that men may follow morality for the sake of its intrinsic worth alone, as they follow other sorts of proven wisdom. For the very same class of facts that tend to show us the absurdity of claiming a special supernatural infallibility for our ideas of right and wrong, at the same time help us in our inquiry as to what these ideas of right and wrong are, what they are derived from, the foundations on which they stand, and the reasons why they have a right to demand our obedience. In our day and in the future—at least, amongst educated men—the loss of the idea of God's authority for such notions is in some degree, compensated for by our increased natural, rational insight into their nature and causes.

"Ah, you may smile, Frank, but this loss will come when the world is ready for it, perhaps, apparently, a little before. Some day, that idea will dwindle and die as many another useful but mistaken notion has died; some day, perhaps, will be criticised by our posterity with about as much real understanding and respect as we pay to the articles of faith of the ancient Egyptians.

"For man's spiritual inclinations and soul-wants are inseparably connected with, criticised and regulated by the amount and sort of knowledge he actually possesses. He may stifle it, slander it, disregard it, stop his ears to it if he likes, but smothered or not, listened to or not, mistaken or not, the mind will have its say, will criticise, weigh, and determine the worth of even the most comforting darling dogmas of his soul. And in spite of many smotherings, and chokings, and snubbings, the intellectual part of mankind is beginning to get very noisy and restless about this universal audacious quotation of the Deity.

"Yes, it will come in its time; and what will follow? Moral anarchy and reign of madness? I don't see their necessity at all, unless the old doctrine dies prematurely, and there is not much chance of this. Man does not live by logic alone, and lucky it is that he doesn't, and will stick to a doctrine of this sort, and be loath to

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give it up as long as his soul feels its necessity, or even its use, let his intellectual and critical part cry out against it ever so loudly. I don't think—I hope the loss will not come to any man until he can feel that it is a very little loss indeed. No, men will not let the doctrine go as long as it is vitally necessary to them; but I think I see reasons why it is not vitally necessary, and that men are finding them, and will find them out.

"I don't expect the change to be brought about by any sudden and violent revolution in thought. It will grow up gradually in men's minds—it is growing now; the idea that morality can justify itself, that it can show its right to be enforced as a duty, without the backing of theological authority, is growing and spreading, and will grow and spread in men's minds until the paramount importance and advantage of resting its authority and teaching it on these reasonable grounds will become apparent. The old doctrine that morality cannot recommend itself to man or demand his obedience unless it is taught as an absolute, imperious, special command from the Creator, will be gradually discarded as a fallacy no longer useful. And what then? I see a vision of men realising as they never did before that morality is the most reasonable of all reasonable things, that it is nothing more or less than the highest wisdom, the sternest duty of man towards the community, that which is best for all, and, consequently, best for individuals. It may be objected to this, that all this is taught now. Yes, I answer, but only as an appendage to the belief in a supernatural revelation, and not nearly equally important. But what I am urging is, that all the morality taught now under a belief in revelation would still be taught then—more strongly and successfully than before, by being made more exclusively prominent. I see a vision of men realising all this, and consequently enforcing wisdom with a wholeheartedness and unanimity of public opinion never shown before on any subject. I see a vision of near-sighted selfishness, hiding, dying, and gradually becoming extinct under the influence of that opinion. I see a vision of the gradual destruction of moral scepticism, arising from a better appreciation of the reasons in favour of virtue. I see men getting a just intolerance of vice as being a mere mean selfish disregard of the good of others. I see increasing energy in both moral and physical research, increasing wonder at and reverence for the works of the Creator.

"I see a vision of children taught virtue, or, as they call it, 'wisdom' on reasonable grounds from their youth up. I see!"——

"I see a vision of the commandments instilled by the rules of arithmetic, of professors of self-sacrifice, of chastity taught on economic principles," sneers Frank.

"Why not?" continued I; "if self-sacrifice can be shown to be in the long run the highest wisdom, the best thing for the good of the

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mass, and, consequently, the best thing in the long run for the individual, why should it not be reasonably and conclusively taught to be so, and the duty of obeying such a conclusion sternly enforced by public opinion as a duty to mankind?

"If you ask me why the teaching of virtue on its own merits has never been generally adopted, the answer is easy: the people who have had, I may really say, the entire control of education, have naturally chosen, because of their theological beliefs, to teach it another way, laying more stress upon the duty of obeying divine commands and preparing for a future life, than upon the fact that virtue is the highest human wisdom, and can be shown to be so by mere ordinary reason, without the aid of a single religious precept; they rather teach the contrary of this, strenuously enforcing upon souls that the two are inseparable—that morality cannot justify itself without the aid of belief in a revelation, but with the removal of the latter must fall to the ground. *As a natural consequence of such teaching, and want of teaching, it very often does.* But if some day, as I prophecy, people are taught as a matter of course, from their youth up, the wisdom of virtue and the stern duty of following it on its own merits, this mischief, at any rate, will be saved. It might not have such power over the stupid and selfish, though the effect of a general public opinion, that virtue is a public duty, would have great force, but it would be the salvation of those souls who now, sometimes, when their faith is shaken, cast their morality away with it, from a mistaken and ignorant notion that the one cannot stand, and can make no claim upon the conscience, without the other.

"An acknowledgment that we can lay no claim to supernatural knowledge or special guidance in our moral ideas does *not* necessarily contain the elements of immorality and hopeless indolence. Men *can* act on relative and natural truth in morality, as in other branches of human knowledge.

"The idea of the inseparability of revelation and morality becomes the more untenable the more it is examined. Every day you may see a freethinker with a morality that would not disgrace a saint, side by side with an utterly undoubting believer in the dogmas of revelation, whose ideas of morality are not far above those of the most degraded savage. You religious people, with your infallibilities, revelations, infallible precepts, and such like, do a great deal in your peculiar way to forward the doctrines of morality, but those doctrines can exist without them; they would and do defy them when they happen to clash with them, and there may come a time when they will dispense with them altogether. That the time may not have come yet when most men's intellects will force them to follow—and when it will be good for them to follow—morality for the sake of the wisdom and rightness of morality alone, I am willing to allow; but that these

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necessary and reasonable rules of life, which really take their root in the very nature of humanity and the circumstances of human life, are bound up unseparably to stand or fall with a belief in the three creeds, or in any creed concerning the supernatural, is a fallacy, and a fallacy that, with the quantity of anxious uncertainty about our knowledge of the supernatural that exists in our day, cannot be too strongly scouted and shown up.

"The common idea that infidelity concerning supernatural tenets necessarily strikes at the root of all good is, I am thankful to say, not true. Moral laws, and the duty of following them, are inseparable from the very existence of humanity, and despair of knowing with sufficient certainty what is beyond nature, tends to make thoughtful men throw the whole of their hearts and energies into their study and their pursuit; they can discard dogmas and definitions of man's duty to God whom they do not know, and still find true and evident reasons for devoting the best energies of their minds and hearts to doing their duty to their neighbour whom they do know; and perhaps some day they may find that the two commandments are inseparable, and that they have in some degree fulfilled both by studying God's laws in the universe patiently and earnestly, and working through them and in them for the benefit of their fellow man.

"You are past preaching to," said Frank, rising with a weary yawn and lighting his candle; "I wish you had thought I was" (another yawn). "I can only say that I look upon your idea of men following morality because of its wisdom and expediency, and enforcing it on those grounds, as utterly chimerical and absurd. The human heart is so depraved, and temptation is so strong, that men in general will never follow the right and wise path without the aid of God's special commandment and encouragement."

"In short," said I, "man never can, and never is going to do what he knows is best for himself, and follow virtue without the aid of that by which sheep are induced to go into butchers' shops, i.e., compulsion. I thank you, Master Frank, in the name of your race."

More yawns, and so to bed.

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Ralph Wilton's Weird.

Chapter IV.

"Send Mrs. M'Kollop here," cried Wilton, hastily and imperiously, to Major Moncrief's servant, who advanced to the door. "One of the Brosedale ladies has been caught in the snow, and is nearly wet through."

He almost lifted Ella from the dog-cart as he spoke, and led her into the warm, comfortable hall. While he removed the plaid that wrapped his guest, the astonished Mrs. M'Kollop came quickly on the scene.

"Eh, my word! but ye're wet!" she exclaimed. "Come wi' me, missee, and I'll see till ye; and you'd be the better of a drop of hot toddy yerself, Colonel."

"Oh, I shall be all right! Just look to Miss Rivers. As soon as you have got rid of your wet things we will have luncheon," he added, addressing her. She bowed, and followed the portly Mrs. M'Kollop.

"I hope there is some place fit to take a lady into," said Wilton to Major Moncrief's man, on whom the domestic arrangements devolved, for he was barely acquainted with Mrs. M'Kollop's name. This important functionary was attached to Glenraven Lodge, and let with the premises. To this species of serfdom she was by no means averse; for the system proved profitable, and, by a sort of mental inversion, she had grown to regard the temporary proprietors as her guests and vassals.

"Yes, sir, I believe Mrs. M'Kollop keeps the top rooms pretty tidy."

"Well, get luncheon, will you? I hope the fire is good." So saying, Wilton hastened to change his own damp clothes, and don a black velvet shooting-jacket. His toilet was completed, and he was fully a quarter of an hour in the dining-room before any one appeared. "Go and let Miss Rivers know luncheon is ready." A few minutes more, and the door opened to admit his guest. An expression of demure fun sparkled in her eyes as she came in, holding up the voluminous drapery of Mrs. M'Kollop's best dress—a strongly-pronounced Mac-something tartan, of bright red and green and yellow—which was evidently a world too wide for her slight waist. Above was the close-fitting grey jacket of her own dress, which had been saved from wet by her waterproof.

"I trust you have been made tolerably comfortable," said Wilton, placing a chair for her, while he glanced with much satisfaction at the fast-falling snow.

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"Your housekeeper has been so good," she replied, with her sweetest, frankest smile. "She exhausted all her resources to supply my wants, and I think would fain have made me come to luncheon in her best bonnet, which is the most wonderful thing you ever saw. It has feathers, and flowers, and currants in it."

"I suppose carrots and turnips would be too much like the insignia of office. But you must be exhausted. Pray sit down and have some luncheon."

"Thank you. I do feel rather hungry."

It seemed almost incredible to be sitting tête-à-tête with Ella, after all his dreams and efforts; but even more surprising was her quiet, unembarrassed manner. Had Wilton been her grandfather, she could not have eaten with more composure, and, it must be added, zest, showing a decided preference for cold game and sweets.

"Let me recommend some hot wine-and-water," said Wilton, as she put down her knife and fork, after refusing a second supply of grouse.

"Thank you, no. I never take wine; but if I might ask for something?"

"Certainly; anything within the resources of Glenraven and Mrs. M'Kollop."

"Then may I have a cup of coffee?"

Wilton immediately ordered it; and when it came, his guest expressed high approval.

"Ah! your people have learned how to make this in France."

"From Frenchmen, at any rate. That was one accomplishment our servants picked up."

"The coffee at Brosedale is so dead; it is not the least like coffee! This reminds me of Italy and France."

"Then you have been a good deal abroad?"

"Nearly all my life." A full stop; and Wilton felt he had led up neatly to the story of her past.

"As you will take nothing more, suppose we go into the next room?" She rose, and then stopped.

"Oh! I have lost Mrs. M'Kollop's shoe under the table." Wilton laughed and assisted in the search.

"I wish we had anything nearer the mark to offer you," he said, as he produced a huge broad-soled thick shoe, tied on the instep. "They must fit you like snow-shoes."

"There is a good deal of stocking to fill up with," she replied, as she managed to shuffle into the room on the opposite side of the hall, which was somewhat more ornamental than the one they left. Sundry sporting prints, a deer's head, various pipes, and plenty of writing materials, with a splendid fire, and several comfortable easy-chairs made it a pleasant apartment.

"And you live here?" said Ella Rivers, moving round the room

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with some curiosity; "and you smoke very good cigars. I recognise the perfume."

"I hope it is not very disagreeable?"

"Disagreeable! Oh no! I love it. But how it snows! There is no chance of my getting back till it abates."

"Certainly not," returned Wilton cheerfully, and adopting her easy friendly tone. "So pray sit down near the fire, and permit me to enjoy the fruit of my treasure trove—I mean a little talk with you."

"Yes—it is very nice to talk over a good fire," she said, returning slowly from the window and seating herself in a large chair; "but I wish it would clear."

"I suppose young Fergusson will be very anxious about you," remarked Wilton, taking advantage of her steady gaze at the fire to study the graceful outline of her head, and ear, and neck, the pale delicate oval of her face. There was a wonderfully patrician look about this mysterious girl; how small and white were the hands she had carelessly clasped upon her knee! and, simple as were her manners too, they were infinitely more refined than the superb Miss Saville's; and, at all events, he would have her all to himself for the next two hours.

"Anxious about me?" she said, after a moment's silence; "not very. He will be anxious about his parcel (which after all I did not get), and vexed at my absence. But Donald is a strange boy. I know him."

"He must be an ungrateful young dog," said Wilton, carefully averting his eyes as she turned to him. "You are so good to him."

"He is not what you would call grateful, though he is very fond of me—that is, I have become a necessity to him; then he knows I am fond of him, and I believe no one else is, not even his father. Poor, poor fellow! Ah! how I feel for him!"

"He cannot be a pleasant companion."

"At times most unpleasant; then, again, wonderfully sympathetic, and so dependent, that *I* feel a great strong, free creature, rich in youth and health and strength, all grand things that Sir Peter's gold cannot buy, and then I can do anything for him. Then I forget the dark side of my own lot, and only see the wealth that nature has given me."

"You are indeed wealthy!"

"In some ways, yes; in others——" She stopped, shook her head, with a smile half sad, half mocking, and resumed her gaze at the fire.

There was a short pause, and Wilton said: "Still, to so bold a spirit as yours, it must be imprisonment indeed; and I am not surprised that you seize every chance of momentary relief. But—forgive me if I am presumptuous—it was no ordinary courage that would take you so far afield that night I caught a glimpse of you

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retreating in the moonlight—no ordinary inducement that would tempt you to such a distance."

"I had inducement enough," she returned, with a slight sigh. "Donald had been in one of his worst moods all day—one of his mean, suspicious tempers, and I could not persuade him to go to bed till late. Then I opened the study window, and looked out to breathe and grow tranquil before I tried to sleep; then the memory of the moonlight nights, long ago, when I used to sit in a corner by the window, before the lamp was brought, and listen to my father talking (rather, dreaming aloud—oh! so gloriously!), came over me with a wild irrestible longing to be out in the free air, alone and standing upright before heaven, with things *really* greater than myself about me—*such* an intense longing, that I sprang down the steps and away." As she said the last word, she unclasped her hands and threw one out, with a sudden expressive gesture full of grace, and not without a certain dignity. "But I suppose, to you it seems shocking." And again she turned to the fire.

"By no means!" exclaimed Wilton eagerly. "Pray do not imagine me a slave to 'the shocking.' What you do seems right, and natural in you to an extraordinary degree; but every one may not view matters as I do, and, I confess, I wished to escort you back, but dared not intrude: besides, I was not alone."

"Escort me back!" she replied, with a low sweet laugh of genuine merriment. "That would have put a climax to my misdoings, and, also (pardon the rudeness), destroyed the sense of freedom. As it was, my outbreak was severely rebuked by Miss Walker, who was informed of my absence, and talked yards of sense and propriety before I escaped to bed. Ah! what a degrading finale to a moment's outbreak into light and liberty! But I must not quarrel with Miss Walker. She is 'Madonna dell' Esperanza.'"

There was a wonderful charm in her voice and manner, a curious mixture of softness and daring.

"And, pray, why do you dignify that iron-grey woman with so romantic a title? I should not imagine her in the least hopeful."

"She found me when I was at a very low ebb, and placed me with Donald."

"Indeed! Then he ought to consider her his 'Dame de bon secours.'"

"He thinks I am fortunate!"

"And when you found yourself so far from human aid that night, did you not feel uncomfortable?" resumed Wilton, hoping to lead her back to her reminiscences.

"Yes. When I turned to go back the fire had nearly burnt out in my heart; but, you see, I have never been with women, so their fears are not mine. I fear what they may think of me when I act differently from them."

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"I suppose, then, you have numerous brothers?"

"I have neither brother nor sister. My father"—she paused. "Ah! if you could have known my father! He was a great politician, a great philanthropist, a true man! and he was surrounded by men like himself, devoted to humanity. They were all very good to me—when they remembered my existence, which was not always, you know." A little arch smile, that made Wilton burn to tell her how irresistibly she absorbed his mind, heart, imagination!

"Well—your father," said he, with wonderful composure, rising as he spoke to stir the fire—"your father, I presume, adored you?"

"Alas, no!" There was great forgiving tenderness and sadness in her voice. "He perhaps remembered me least of all; and when he did, I brought bitter thoughts. My mother, whom he did adore, died when I was born; so you see I have been quite alone. Yet I grew to be of importance to him; for just before he died, he told me to take her ring, which he had always worn, and wear it for both their sakes. See, there it is." She held out her right hand to show where it encircled her slender third finger.

"Then you lived in Italy?" said Wilton, to lead her on.

"Yes, my first memories are of Italy. A great half-ruined villa on a hill-side near Genoa; and my nurse, a Roman woman, with such grand black eyes. I used to love to look into them, and see myself in them. How she loved me and spoiled me! My father must have had money then, for he came and went, and seemed to me a great person; but I feared him, though he was gentle and beautiful, for he shunned me. Oh, yes, how noble he looked! None of the others were like him; and he was English on his father's side, so he said, when he told me to keep the name of Rivers; but we had many names: one in Italy, another in Paris, another in Germany. I did not like Paris. The first time we were there I had a *gouvernante;* she taught me a little, and tormented me much; but still I do know French best. I can write it well; but though I speak Italian and German, I cannot read either or write either." She had again clasped her hands over her knee, and went on softly and dreamily as if to herself; Wilton still keeping silence and gazing intently at the speaker, earnestly hoping nothing would interrupt or turn her from her spoken musings.

"But you evidently learned to draw," he suggested softly.

"My father was a great artist—would have been acknowledged as a great artist, had he not been gradually absorbed in schemes for raising the poor, and ignorant, and oppressed, for giving them political life. There were many artists among our friends, and all were willing to teach me and help me. To draw seemed to me as natural as to breathe, and if I ever had a moment of personal ambition, it was to be a true, a recognised artist; but I had scarce any. You,

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even you, patrician Englishman as you are!" turning to him with sudden animation, "you would have admired my father. He was my ideal of a true knight, so simple, so noble, so refined; with such a deep, fervent faith in his fellow-men. Of course, he and all our friends were hunted, proscribed; so I never knew a relation. And he, my father, never could bear to speak of my mother; so I only know from her picture that she was fair and sweet-looking."

"What a strange, sad life for a girl!" said Wilton, with genuine sympathy.

"Strange, but not sad. Oh, no! I was ignorant (I am ignorant, by your standard), and not a little neglected. But what delight it was to listen to the men my father knew, to hear the grand schemes they planned; the noble, tender pity for the suffering and oppressed; the real brotherhood they acknowledged to all mankind, and the zest of danger; for often a well-loved comrade was missing, and some never returned! Imprisonment in Italy or Prussia for a political offence is a serious matter. The first time I ever won real notice from my father was at Naples. There was a man we loved much; he was called Diego; it was not his real name. He was very much suspected by the government. My father found out he was to be seized that day, and he knew not who to trust to send him word; so I begged to be honoured by his permission to carry the message, and I managed it all. I borrowed a costume from my maid's niece; I went alone on the Corso, and offered bunches of violets to every one—oh! I had heaps of paoli—till I met him and said the word which sufficed."

"You did this?" cried Wilton.

"Yes, I had but thirteen years then. Oh! my father always noticed me after, and I would have dared much for that. Then we were in London and in many places; we grew poorer and poorer. I think my father helped the cause largely. Two years ago, we were in Paris, and then I saw my father was dying. There were very few of our clique there, for the Emperor's spies were legion. I did not stop to think of fear or grief; I only wanted to keep him quiet and content to the last, for you see," with a sort of exultation very touching, "I was now very important to him; he thought more of me, and I have always believed it was in the hope of arranging some shelter, some refuge for me that he came to London, now more than two years ago. Diego came to see us; he had a long talk with my father, who said to him when he was going, 'Do your best, for her sake.'

"Two days after, Diego came again and demanded to see my father alone. Presently there was a cry; they called me, and when I went in, my father lay in Diego's arms, the blood streaming from his mouth. He died two days after;" an instant's pause and she resumed quickly: "I was quite alone, and had but a few shillings,

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Poor Diego, how good he was! He did much for me. My father had a diamond ring; they sold it, and so things were paid for. Diego, poor fellow! he was rich then; he had five gold pieces, sovereigns. He left me two. He was obliged to go away; he promised Mrs. Kershaw to come back for me, but he never came. He is no doubt imprisoned or killed."

"Who was Mrs. Kershaw?" asked Wilton, huskily, "and how old is this Diego?"

"Diego! Oh, fifty—sixty, I am not sure! Mrs. Kershaw is the landlady of the lodgings where my father died. Such a strange woman! Not unkind, at all events to me. There was a lady in the rooms above ours who was very kind to me, and felt for me. Nearly five months after I was left quite alone Miss Walker came to stay with this lady, and so they managed to have me engaged as companion to Donald. Ah, it was all so wretched! Nothing reconciled me to Brosedale but the scenery; that made me remember there was a world of life and beauty beyond Donald's study." She stopped, and, leaning back, pressed both hands over her face, as if to shut out the present. Wilton scarce knew how to speak to her without saying too much. He had sufficiently delicate instincts to feel that he must not, when she was in such a mood, show, by the slightest indication, that he was her lover; nay, his deep sympathy made him for the moment forget the fair woman in the lonely, suffering girl.

"And had none of your father's friends a wife or a sister with whom you might have taken shelter? Brosedale, under such circumstances, must have been a real *inferno*."

"No; I have met one or two ladies abroad connected with our cause, and they were far away. But Brosedale was more astonishing than anything else. Miss Walker, who likes me, although I shock her every hour in the day, warned me of the respect I must show to 'miladi' and her daughters, and I never dreamed of disrespect towards them, but they were—they are, so strange; they are so ignorant; they belong to the Middle Ages. When I spoke to them of the scenery; when I asked them questions about their country; when I addressed them as my fellow-creatures, they were petrified; they were indignant; they went through a little comedy of insulted majesty, very droll, but not pleasant. Then I began to know what it is to believe that you are made of different clay from certain others of your fellows. Alas! what wide gulfs still yawn between man and man, and what precious things must be cast in before they are filled up.

"Well—and Donald? How did you get on with Donald?"

"He was inclined to treat me like a petted animal; but, no! *Per Baccho!* that should not be. I said, "If you are good, you shall call me Ella, and I will call you Donald.' He replied, 'I am Master Fergusson;' and I said, 'Not so. It is too long; besides, I am your

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superior in age and in knowledge, so between us there shall be kindness and freedom.' Now I mark my displeasure by calling him Master Fergusson. Ah! how astonished was Miss Walker and 'miladi,' but I laughed."

"I am surprised he can bear you out of his sight," exclaimed Wilton, warmly, and checked himself; but she only noticed his words.

"He does not like me to be away." I am often imprisoned for weeks. Last August I grew weak and languid, so Lady Fergusson gave me a holiday. I had nowhere to go but to Mrs. Kershaw's; then she was taken ill—a bad fever—so I nursed her, thankful to be of use. Then Donald summoned me back, and," turning with the peculiar air of gracious acknowledgment which Wilton had before noticed, she added, "it was on my journey back I met you. Oh, how weary I was! I had been awake night after night. I was stupefied with fatigue, and you were so good. Could death then have come to me in sleep, I should have held out my arms to him. Yet you see I was terrified at the idea of being hurt or torn when the train was overset."

"You behaved like—like an angel, or rather like a true high-souled woman."

She laughed softly, and, rising, attempted to walk to the window. "Ah!" she exclaimed, "I forgot my shoes;" then, resuming her seat, went on: "There, I have told you all my life. Why, I cannot say; but if I have wearied you, it is your own fault. You listened as if you cared to hear, while to me it has been sad, yet sweet, to recall the past, to talk of my father to one who will not mock at his opinions—his dreams, if you will. But, ah! what dreams! what hopes! Thank God! he lived to know of Garibaldi's triumph—to see the papal throne tremble at the upheaval of Italy! These glimpses of light gladdened him at the last; for never was Christian martyr upheld by faith in a future world more steadfastly than my father by his belief in the political regeneration of this one. Yet I have, perhaps, forgotten myself in speaking so much."

She turned towards Wilton as she spoke, and, placing her elbow on the arm of the chair, rested her chin in the palm of her hand, looking at him with the large, deep blue eyes which had so struck him at first, her long lashes wet with tear-drops, of which she was unconscious.

"At least, said Wilton, "you must feel that no speaker ever riveted attention more than you have. As for the accuracy of the opinions so disinterestedly upheld, I neither combat nor assent to them. I can only think of you—so young, so alone!" It is impossible to say how much passionate sympathy he was about to express, when a sudden change in Ella Rivers' face made him stop and turn round. To his infinite annoyance there stood Major Moncrief, with

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the door in his hand, and an expression of utter blank astonishment on his countenance, his coat covered with fast-melting snow, and evidently just dismounted.

"Hollo, Moncrief!" cried Wilton, his every-day sharp senses recalled in a moment by this sudden, unwelcome apparition. "Wet to the skin, I suppose, like Miss Rivers"—a wave of the hand towards her—"and myself. I most fortunately overtook her halfway from Monkscleugh, and brought her here for shelter."

"Oh!" ejaculated Moncrief: it sounded like a groan.

"You have met my chum, Major Moncrief, have you not, Miss Rivers?"

She shook her head. "You know I am always with Donald."

"Oh, ah, I see!" muttered Moncrief. "No, I have never had the pleasure of meeting the young lady before; and so, Wilton, I will not interrupt you. I will go and change my clothes."

"Interrupt!" said Ella, as he left the room. "What does he mean by interrupt? Who is he?—your uncle—your guardian?"

"Do you think I require a guardian at my age," replied Wilton, laughing, though greatly annoyed at Moncrief's tone.

"How old are you," asked Ella, but so softly and simply that the question did not seem rude.

"Almost four and thirty; and, *en revanché*, how old are you?"

"Almost twenty."

"I should not have thought you so much; yet there are times you look more. However, Moncrief is an old brother officer of mine; really a friend, but a queer fellow, a little odd."

"I see; and I do not think he likes me to be here. Can I not go?" said Ella, starting up and making her way to the window, although she left a shoe behind her in her progress.

"Not like you! More probably fascinated at first sight," returned Wilton, attempting to laugh off the impression she had received, though feeling terribly annoyed at Moncrief's manifestation. "And as to returning, you cannot stir just yet; the snow has only just cleared off and may recommence."

"Still I should so much like to return; and I am sure I could manage to walk very well."

"I do not wish to be oppressively hospitable, so I will leave you for a moment to inquire what will be the best mode of reaching Brosedale." So saying, he quited the room and followed Major Moncrief.

He found that excellent soldier in his dressing-gown, and wearing a more "gruesome" expression than could be accounted for by his occupation, viz., sipping some scalding-hot whisky-and-water.

"Have you had anything to eat?" asked Wilton amiably. "I believe luncheon is still on the table."

"No, it is not," replied the Major curtly; "and I do not want

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anything. I had a crust of bread and cheese at that farmer's below the mill, so you can go back to your charming guest."

"And you must come with me, Moncrief. Never mind the dressing-gown, man; it is quite becoming. You frightened Miss Rivers, you looked so 'dour' just now. I want her to see what a pleasant fellow you can be."

"Thank you! I am not quite such a muff as to spoil a tête-à-tête."

"Come, Moncrief, you know that is bosh. I overtook Miss Rivers as she was struggling through the snow, and I do not suppose you or any other man would have left her behind. Then I couldn't possibly pass my own gate in such a storm; besides, the poor girl was so wet. Be that as it may, you shall not be uncivil; so finish your grog, and come along."

"Let me put on my coat. If I am to play propriety, I must dress accordingly. How in the name of fortune did you come to know this Miss Rivers?" growled Moncrief.

"Why at Brosedale, of course. Whenever they dragged me in to see that poor boy she was there, and one can't be uncivil to a woman, and a pretty girl to boot."

"Pretty!" ejaculated the Major, thrusting himself with unnecessary vehemence into his coat; "I did not see much prettiness about her; she has big eyes, that's all."

"Come and have another look, then, and perhaps you will find it out," said Wilton pleasantly, as sorely against his will Moncrief followed him downstairs.

"I have much pleasure in introducing two such admirable representatives of two great opposing systems. Major Moncrief is conservative among conservatives; Miss Rivers revolutionary among democrats!" said Wilton.

"You say so for me; I myself scarce know enough to be anything," she replied in a low tone, turning from the window at which she was standing when they entered, acknowledging the introduction and Moncrief's "boo," as he would have called it, by a slight haughty curtsey, which even Mrs. M'Kollop's plaid dress did not spoil, as she spoke.

"A young lady confessing ignorance on any subject is a *rara avis* nowadays," returned Moncrief gloomily.

Ella Rivers looked earnestly at him as he spoke, and then glanced with a sort of mute appeal to Wilton, who felt instinctively that in spite of her composed brave air, her heart was beating with sorrowful indignation at the Major's unfriendly aspect. "You must know, Miss Rivers," said Wilton, with his pleasantest smile, longing all the time to fall upon and thrash desperately his good friend and comrade, "you must know that my friend Moncrief is the gloomy ascetic of the regiment, always available for the skeleton's part at the feast, that

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is the mess, a terror to lively subs, and only cheerful when some one in a terrible scrape requires his help to get out of it; but one grows accustomed even to a skeleton. I have been shut up with him for nearly six weeks, and you see I have not committed suicide yet; but he is a first-rate old Bones after all!" slapping the ungenial Major on the shoulder.

"Is he really unhappy?" asked Ella, with such genuine wonder and curiosity that the 'dour' Major yielded to the irresistible influences, and burst into a gracious laugh, in which Wilton joined, and the cloud which Moncrief brought with him was almost dispersed—not quite, for Ella was changed pale, composed, silent, with an evidently unconscious drawing to Wilton's side, that did not help to steady his pulse or cool his brain. "It is quite clear," said Miss Rivers anxiously; "may I not return? for in another hour night will close. I must go!"

"Certainly," cried Wilton, who was feeling dreadfully bored by the flagging conversation and general restraint of Moncrief's presence; "your dress will be dry by this time, and while you put it on I will order the dog-cart. I will drive you over to Brosedale in half an hour, snow or no snow."

"You—drive me—Oh, no! I can walk quite well; I am not the least afraid. Do not come out again."

"My dear Miss Rivers! allow you to walk alone? Impossible! Even this stern Bones, this incarnation of inexorable fate, would not demand such a sacrifice. Moncrief, ring the bell; summon Mrs. M'Kollop from the vasty deep to attend our fair guest. You must know, Miss Rivers, my brother-in-arms is part proprietor of this sylvan lodge?"

"Then will he forgive my intrusion," said their guest, with an air so deprecating as to a man of his age, so certainly dignified as to herself, yet so simple withal, that the hidden spring of chivalry far down in the man's nature was struck and rushed to the surface all the more strongly for the depth of the boring.

"You must think me 'a skeleton of the feast,' indeed, as Wilton has been good enough to describe me, if I were not ready to welcome the chance visit of a charming young lady; I am not quite so hopeless an old 'Bones' as you both would make out."

"Bravo!" cried Wilton, highly pleased at his change of tone.

"Thank you," said Miss Rivers simply; and then the door opened to admit Mrs. M'Kollop, who bore upon her arm a mass of drapery, and in her hand a very small pair of boots, evidently the garments she had been drying.

"They are all nice an' weel aired, if you want to be going," said the benign ruler of the roost. "It's a wee bit clear just noo, but I'm thinking the frost is coming on, so the snaw will be harder by-an'-

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by; an' if the Major don't mind having dinner an hour before his usual, a drap o' hare soup and a cut out of a loin o' mountain mutton will warm ye up weel, an' mak' ye ready for the road;" or, as she pronounced it, "rod."

"Mrs. M'Kollop, you are a most sensible woman," said Wilton gravely. Moncrief looked alarmed; and Miss Rivers merely observed, "I will come with you," and left the room, accompanied by the friendly cook. Wilton followed immediately, to give orders about the dog-cart, and Major Moncrief was left alone. He walked once or twice up and down the room with a troubled and irate expression, he then stirred the fire viciously, threw down the poker with a clang, and, drawing a chair close up, thrust his feet almost against the bars. How long he sat in gloomy reverie he knew not, but he was roused by the entrance of Wilton, who ushered in their guest, saying, "Miss Rivers wants to say good-bye, Moncrief."

"Yes, good-bye!" said she, in her soft yet clear voice, which always seemed to fix attention. "Thank you—thank you both for your kind hospitality."

With a slight, touching hesitation she held out her hand, and Moncrief took it with much politeness and an altered expression. "Good-bye, then, as you will not stay for the hare soup and a cut of the mountain mutton. I hope you will not take cold. Have you nothing to put round your throat? You must have this muffler of mine, if you will condescend to wear it. Jump up, Wilton. I will help Miss Rivers."

So spake the Major, in his joy to speed the parting guest. Wilton obeyed, somewhat amused, and they started. But the drive was a silent one on Miss Rivers' side; all Wilton's dexterous observations and thoughtful care could not win a look—scarce a word. "Does she regret she opened her heart to me?" he thought; and as they neared the great house, he could not refrain from saying, "I shall often think of the interesting sketch you have given me of your wanderings in many lands, Miss Rivers, though I shall only speak of them to yourself."

"Pray, pray, put it all out of your mind! I am half ashamed of having talked so much of myself. Think no more of it."

"Suppose the subject will not be banished? At least," resumed Wilton, after a moment's pause to tighten the reins of his self-control, "I shall look upon liberal politics with a new light, after the glimpse you have given me of their inner life."

"If, when you have power, you will think of the people, I am not sorry I spoke." She said it very softly, almost sadly.

"I shall look in to-morrow, to know if you are all right," he replied.

They had now reached the entrance. Wilton sprang down, and, as Miss Rivers was muffled in plaids, nearly lifted her from the carriage, though with all the deference he would have shown a princess.

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"Good-bye! I trust you will not be the worse."

"Adieu!" For a moment she raised her eyes to his with a frank kind glance, and vanished into the house. For a moment Wilton hesitated, then mounted the dog-cart, and drove back as fast as circumstances would allow. He was conscious of an angry, uncomfortable sensation towards Moncrief—a feeling that it would be a great relief to avoid dining with him—of a curious, uneasy strain of dissatisfaction with himself—with the routine of life—with everything! It was so infernally stupid, smoking and reading, or listening to Moncrief's prosings, all the evening; while that cranky, tiresome boy, Fergusson, would be talked to, and soothed, and petted by Ella Rivers. And she!—would she wish to be back at Glenraven, telling the story of her simple yet stirring life to an absorbed listener? Yes, without a shadow of conceit he might certainly conclude that she would prefer an intelligent companion like himself to that cross-grained boy; but he had very little to nourish conceit upon in the recollection of the delightful *tête-à-tête* he had enjoyed. Never before had he met a woman so free from the indescribable consciousness by which the gentler sex acknowledge the presence of the stronger. She must have been much in the society of men, and of men, too, who were not lovers. Yet stop! How much of her composure and frankness was due to the fact of her being already wooed and promised to one of those confounded *carbonari* fellows! The very idea made Wilton double-thong his leader—for tandem style had been thought necessary—to the infinite surprise of his servant. However, he reached his destination at last, and as he threw off his plaid in the hall Mrs. M'Kollop's broad and beaming face appeared at a side door.

"Aweel, sir, did ye win ower a' right to Brosedale wi' the young leddy? I've been aye watching the weather; for I don't think she is just that strong. Eh, sir! but she is a bonnie bird—sae saft and kind! When she was going, after I had red up her things for her, she says, 'If you are as good a cook as you are a ladies' maid, I am sure Major Moncrief must be pleased with his dinners,' says she; an' wi' that she taks this neckerchief from her pretty white throat, and says she, so gentle and so grand, 'Wear this for me, Mrs. M'Kollop,' putting it round my neck her ainsel'. 'Think, whenever ye put it on,' says she, 'that I shall always remember your motherly care.' The bonnie bird! I'm thinking she has nae mither, or they wouldn't let her be worried wi' that ill-faured, ill-tempered bairn at Brosedale."

"I left Miss Rivers quite safe, I assure you, and, as far as I could observe, quite well, at the door," said Wilton, who had listened with much attention to this long speech, looking all the time at the pretty violet necktie held up in triumph by Mrs. M'Kollop, and conscious of a boyish but strong inclination to purchase it, even at a high

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premium, from the worthy housekeeper. "I am sure you did your best for our charming visitor."

"That I did; an' I tauld her that it was a pleasure to cook for the Colonel; for though she spoke of the Major, it was aye *you* she thocht on."

"Oh, nonsense!" returned Wilton good-humouredly, and he left the eloquent Mrs. M'Kollop to join the moody Moncrief, with whom he exchanged but few remarks, till dinner thawed them. The evening passed much as usual, but neither mentioned their guest—a fact by no means indicating that she was forgotten by either.

Chapter V.

Wilton was true to his intention, and rode over the next day to make the promised inquiry, when he had the pleasure of spending half an hour with Donald, but Ella Rivers never appeared. The boy was in one of his better moods, although that was a poor consolation.

"I thought Ella was never coming back yesterday," he said in his plaintive, querulous voice. "I could not make out whether she had been lost in the snow, or whether that Mr. St. George Wilton had run away with her. Where did you pick up Ella?"

"On the common half-way to Monksleugh; it is fortunate I did so, or perhaps you might have been obliged to do without her for some time longer. I fear she would have lost her way altogether. She might have been wandering about for hours, and I fancy she is not over strong."

"She is well enough! Every one is well enough but me!"

"I suppose," said Wilton, to change the subject, "the rest of your party return to-morrow?"

"I am afraid they do. I wish they would stay away. They have taken me up disgustingly since *you* came to see me. I was much happier alone with Ella. I don't mind *your* coming—you are not a humbug; but I hate Helen, she is so insolent; and that cousin of yours is detestable. He is so conceited—so ready to make allowance for every one. And then he always speaks Italian to Ella, and worries her; I know he does, though she will not tell me what he says."

The boy's words struck an extraordinary pang to Wilton's heart. Had Ella met this diplomatic sprig in Italy? Has he the enormous advantage of having known her and her father in their old free wandering days? If so, why had she not mentioned him?

"Well," exclaimed Wilton, while these thoughts revolved themselves, "if you do not like him, do not let him come in here. But I thought he was a universal genius, and an utterly fascinating fellow!"

"The women think so," returned young Fergusson, with an air of

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superior wisdom, "but I think him a nuisance. Will you kindly ring the bell, Colonel Wilton?"

"What has become of Miss Rivers?" to the servant, who quickly appeared. "Tell her to come here."

Though disposed to quarrel with the terms of the message, Wilton awaited the result with some anxiety. The reply was, "Miss Walker's compliments; Miss Rivers was hearing Miss Isabel read Italian, and she could not come just yet."

"It is infamous!" exclaimed Donald, working himself into a fury. "They all take her from me—they don't care what becomes of me! Give me my crutches, James. I will go to the schoolroom myself; so I shall say good-bye to you, Colonel."

He dragged himself out of the room with surprising rapidity, and Wilton felt he must not stay.

The rest of the day was rendered restless and uncomfortable by Donald's words. But Wilton, though of a passionate and eager nature, had also a strong will, and was too reasonable not to determine resolutely to banish the tyrannic idea which had taken such possession of his heart or imagination. He noticed, with mingled resentment and amusement, the sudden silence and reserve of his friend Moncrief on the subject of Brosedale and its inhabitants. What an absurd, strait-laced old Puritan he was growing! Wilton felt it would be a relief when he departed to pay his promised visit in the South. So, as the weather, after the memorable snow-storm, moderated, and proved favourable for sport, hunting and shooting were resumed with redoubled vigour, and the Major's solemn looks gradually cleared up.

"I shall be rather in the blues here when you are gone," said Wilton, as they sat together the evening before the Major was to leave. "You have not been the liveliest companion in the world of late, still I shall miss you, old boy."

The Major gave an inarticulate grunt, without removing his cigar from his lips.

"So," continued Wilton, "as Lord D—— asks me over to dine and stay a few days while General Loftus and another Crimean man are there, I shall go; and perhaps I may look up the 15th afterwards; they are quartered at C——.

"Do!" said the Major, emphatically, and with unusual animation. "There's nothing more mischievous than moping alone and getting into the blue-devils!—nothing more likely to drive a man to suicide or matrimony, or some infernal entanglement even worse! Go over to D—— Castle by all means—go and have a jolly week or two with the 15th; and, if you will take my advice, do not return here."

"My dear Moncrief," interrupted Wilton coolly, for he was a little nettled at the rapid disposal of his time, "why should I not return

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here? What mischief do you fear for me? Don't turn enigmatical at this time of day."

"What mischief do I fear? The worst of all—a *fair* piece of mischief! Not so pretty, perhaps, but 'devilish atthractive,' as poor O'Connor used to say."

Wilton was silent for a moment, to keep his temper quiet. He felt unspeakably annoyed. Anything less direct he could have laughed off or put aside, but to touch upon such a subject in earnest galled him to the quick. To be suspected of any serious feeling towards Ella necessitated either appearing an idiot in the eyes of a man like Moncrief—an idiot capable of throwing away his future for the sake of a freak of passion—or as entertaining designs more suited to worldly wisdom, yet which it maddened him to think any man dared to associate with a creature that somehow or other had managed to establish herself upon a pedestal, such as no other woman had ever occupied, in his imagination.

"I think," said he at last—and Moncrief was struck by the stern resentment in his tone—"I think that too much shooting has made you mad! What, in the name of Heaven, are you talking of? Do you think I am the same unlicked cub you took in hand twelve or fourteen years ago? If you and I are to be friends, let me find my own road through the jungle of life."

"All right," said the Major philosophically. "Go your own way. I wash my hands of you."

"It is your best plan," returned Wilton dryly; and the evening passed rather heavily.

The next morning Major Moncrief took leave of his friend. They parted with perfect cordiality, and Wilton drove him over to Monkscleugh.

It is by no means clear that the Major's well-meant warning did the least good. The vexation it caused helped to keep the subject working in Wilton's mind. Certain it was, that after returning from Monkscleugh and writing two or three letters, he took advantage of a fine wintry afternoon to stroll leisurely to the brae before mentioned, and beyond it, to the piece of border ground between the Brosedale plantations and the road, where he had held his horse for Ella Rivers to sketch; but all was silent and deserted, so he returned to dress and drive over to D—— Castle.

It was a pleasant party, and Wilton was a most agreeable addition. He felt at home and at ease with the Earl's kindly, well-bred daughters; and perhaps they would have been a little surprised, could they have read his thoughts, to find that he classed them as unaffected gentlewomen almost equal to the humble companion of Sir Peter Ferguson's crippled boy.

Parties like this, of which Ralph Wilton formed one, are so much

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alike that it is unnecessary to describe the routine. The third day of his visit the Brosedale family came to dinner, and with them St. George Wilton. Notwithstanding Sir Peter's wealth and Lady Fergusson's fashion, invitations to D—— Castle were few and far between; nor did Ralph Wilton's position as a visitor in the house—a favoured, honoured guest—seem of small importance in Helen Saville's eyes.

Wilton took her down to dinner, with a sort of friendly glow pervading his manner, well calculated to deceive the object of his attentions. He was dimly aware that, after all his reasoning, all his struggles for self-control, his dominant idea was that if Miss Saville was not the rose, she lived with her.

"I have never seen you since the coming of age at Brantwood; you have been out when I called, and in when I rode about in search of you—in short, you have scarce cast me a crumb of notice since my polyglot cousin has taken up the running, and left me nowhere," said Wilton, under the general buzz of talk, while the chief butler whispered a confidential query as to whether he would have hock or champagne.

"If you will not come in search of the crumbs, you cannot expect to get them," said Miss Saville, looking boldly into his eyes with a smile. "Mamma asked you to dinner the day after our return, but in vain."

"Ah, that day I knew we were to hunt with the ——, and I feared I should not be able to reach Brosedale in time for dinner. Now, tell me, how is every one? Your sister—I mean the schoolroom one—I see, my opposite neighbour, is flourishing. How is young Fergusson?"

"Isabel has a cold; but Donald has been wonderfully well. I think we cheer him up. Benevolence seems to run in your family, Colonel Wilton. You set the example, and Mr. St. George Wilton followed it up. Now, we are so anxious to amuse Donald that we congregate on wet, stormy mornings or afternoons in his room, and try to draw—are fearfully snubbed by the young heir, and silently endured by his little companion, who is such a strange girl. By the way, your cousin seems to have known some of her clique abroad. He says they were a dreadful set of communists and freethinkers."

"Indeed," he returned carelessly, as he raised his glass to his lips and made a mental note of the information. "And, pray, how much longer do you intend to foster my delightful relative in the genial warmth of Brosedale?"

"As long as he likes to stay; but he talks of leaving next week."

"Ah, he finds it difficult to tear himself away?"

"That I know nothing about. How long do you remain here?"

"Till the day after to-morrow."

"Then you had better dine with us on the twentieth. I know mamma intends to ask you. The Brantwood party are to be with us, and some people we met at Scarborough last autumn."

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"Of course I shall be most happy."

Now there was nothing Wilton hated more than dining at Brosedale; the artificial tone of the house was detestable, and he was always tantalized by knowing that although under the same roof with Ella, he had not the least chance of seeing her. Nevertheless, he was always impelled to go by a vague, unreasonable hope that some chance might bring about a meeting; and now, as he had absolutely written to his old friends of the 15th, to say he would be with them the ensuing week, he felt ravenously eager to encounter the very danger from which he had determined to fly. But Helen Saville's hint had filled him with curiosity and uneasiness. It was as he feared. St. George Wilton and Ella Rivers had doubtless many experiences in common which both might prefer talking about in a tongue unfamiliar to the rest of the audience, for he did not, of course, attach any value to Donald's remark that Ella did not like the clever *attaché*. Why should she not like him? He looked across the table and studied his kinsman's face very carefully while Helen Saville told him of a run she had enjoyed with the —— shire hounds while staying at Brantwood.

St. George Wilton was occupied in the agreeable task of entertaining Lady Mary Mowbray, so his cousin could observe him with impunity. He was a slight, delicate-looking man, with high, aristocratic features, pale, with fair hair and light eyes, thin-lipped, and nominally near-sighted, which entitled him to use a glass. He wore the neatest possible moustaches and imperial, and when he smiled, which was not often (though his face was always set in an amiable key), he showed a row of very regular white teeth, but rather too pointed withal, especially the molars, which were slightly longer than the rest, and gave a somewhat wolfish, fang-like expression to that otherwise bland performance. His voice was carefully modulated, his accent refined, and his ease of manner the perfection of art.

Although the cousins had seldom met before, they had heard of each other, forming their respective estimates from their special standpoints—St. George heartily despising Ralph, as a mere stupid, honest, pig-headed soldier, whose luck in coming somewhat to the front was a disgrace even to the whims of that feminine deity, Fortune. How such rapid promotion could be brought about without finesse, without tact, without anything more extraordinary than simple duty-doing, was beyond the peculiar construction of St. George's mind to conceive. While Ralph scarcely bestowed any consideration whatever on his kinsman—he had heard of him as a clever, rising man, and also as a "keen hand;" but now he had acquired a sudden importance; and Ralph, as he gazed at the bland countenance opposite, and traced the hard lines under its set expression, laughed inwardly at the notion of extracting any information which St. George was disinclined to give.

Nevertheless, when they joined the ladies, Wilton approached his

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cousin, and opened the conversation by inquiring for a mutual acquaintance, one of St. George's brother *attachés;* this naturally led to other topics, and their talk flowed easily enough. "I am told you were received by our eccentric relative, Lord St. George," said his namesake, at last: "rather an unusual event for him to see any one, I believe?"

"Yes; he sent for me, or I should never have thought of presenting myself. He looks very old and worn, and not particularly amiable."

"He would not let me in! I wonder what he will do with all his property. If he dies intestate, I suppose you will inherit everything?"

"I suppose so; but I strongly suspect he will not leave me a *sou.* I am not pliant enough; and that unfortunate daughter of his may have left children to inherit, after all. I fancy I heard she was dead."

"So have I," said St. George. "Who did she marry?"

"I believe a Spaniard—an adventurer, with fine eyes and a splendid voice; I forget the name. Old Colonel du Cane, who was about town in those days, remembers the affair and the scandal, but the whole thing is forgotten now. I wonder old St. George did not marry and cut out every one."

"Unless he makes a very distinct will, you will have to spend a large slice of your fortune in defeating the pretenders who are sure to spring up."

"Or you will," returned Wilton, laughing; "for he is as likely to leave it to one as the other, or to some charity."

"To some charity? That is surely the last of improbabilities."

"It is impossible to say," returned Wilton; and there was a short pause, during which he revolved rapidly in his own mind how he could best approach the topic there uppermost. "How long do you stay at Brosedale?" he resumed abruptly, as St. George looked round, as if about to move away.

"Perhaps a week longer. I have already paid a visitation, but the house is comfortable, the girls agreeable, and the *padrone* unobtrusive."

"If you had not been in such luxurious quarters, and enjoying such excellent sport, I should have asked you to try a day or two on the moor I have at Glenravon."

"Thank you; I should have been most happy, but am engaged to Lord Parchmount after the twenty-fifth."

"Did you ever meet any of Lady Fergusson's people, the Savilles she is so fond of talking about; I fancy there was a brother of her's in the —th Hussars?"

"A brother of her former husband, you mean. I don't believe Lady Fergusson ever had a brother or a father, or any blood tie of any kind, but sprang up full-blown, lovely, ambitious, aristocratic, at the touch of some magic wand; or, to come to a commonplace simile, in a

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single night's growth, like a toad-stool. She has been eminently successful too. What a catch Sir Peter was! Now, if that wretched boy were to die—for which consummation, no doubt, her ladyship devoutly prays—and Helen Saville would play her cards with the commonest discretion, she might secure the fortune for herself and her sisters; but she is a very uncertain person, a woman on whom no one could count." And St. George shook his head, as though he had given the subject mature consideration.

"I suppose you have seen the son and heir?" asked Wilton.

"Frequently. He dislikes me, and I am amused at the elaborate display he makes of it. I also like to air my Italian with his interesting little companion."

"You knew her in Italy, I think Miss Saville said," remarked Wilton.

"Knew her? Never. I fancy, from what she says, I have met some of the people her father associated with—a very disreputable set."

"Sharpers and blacklegs, I suppose," said Wilton carelessly.

"No; politically disreputable—dreamers of utopian dreams, troublesome items to governments; amiable men who will make martyrs of themselves. You have no idea in England what a nuisance these fellows are: of course there are plenty of desperate fanatics mixed up with them. I do not remember the name of Rivers among those I have met, but I imagine that picturesque girl at Brosedale was among the better class. She really looks like a gentlewoman: with her knowledge of languages and air of refinement she would make a charming travelling companion."

As the accomplished *attaché* uttered this with a soft, arch smile, as though it were an infantine jest, he little thought what a large amount of self-control he called into action in his cousin's mind. To have seized him by the collar, and shaken him till he retracted the insulting words, would have been a great relief; to have rebuked him sternly for speaking lightly of a girl of whom he knew no evil, would have been some satisfaction; but modern manners forbade the first, and a due sense of the ridiculous the second. Control himself as Wilton might, he could not call up the answering smile which St. George expected, but instead stared at him with a fixed, haughty stare, which, although rather unaccountable to its object, seemed sufficiently disagreeable to make him turn away and seek more congenial companionship.

Wilton, too, talked and laughed, and played his part with a proper degree of animation; but a bruised, galled sensation clung to him all the evening. There is a large class of men for whom such a remark as St. George Wilton's would have been fatally destructive to the charm and romance enfolding an object of admiration. To find what is precious to them common and unholy in the eyes of another, would

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destroy the preciousness and desecrate the holiness! But there is another, a smaller, though nobler and stronger, class, whom the voice of the scoffer, scoff he never so subtly, cannot incite to doubt or disloyalty. These are the men who see with their own eyes, and Wilton was one of them. It was with the sort of indignation a crusader might have felt to see an infidel handling a holy relic, that he thought of his cousin's careless words. Nay, more, reflecting that St. George was but one of many who would have thus felt and spoken of a girl to whom he dared not address a word of love lest it might check or destroy the sweet, frank friendliness with which she treated him, he asked himself again, what was to be the end thereof? Then he for the first time acknowledged to himself what he had often indistinctly felt before, that to tell her he loved her, to ask her to be his wife, to read astonishment, perhaps dawning tenderness, in her wonderful eyes, to hold her to his heart, to own her before the world, to shelter her from difficulty so far as one mortal can another, would be heaven to him!

She had struck some deeper, truer chord in his nature than had ever been touched before; and his whole being answered; all that seemed impossible and insurmountable gradually faded into insignificance compared to his mighty need for that quiet, pale, dark-eyed little girl!

The day after Wilton's return from D—— Castle, feeling exceedingly restless and unaccountably expectant, he sallied forth with his gun on his shoulder, more as an excuse than with any active sporting intentions. As he passed the gate into the road, a large half-bred mastiff, belonging to Sir Peter Fergusson, rushed up, and Wilton, knowing he was an ill-tempered brute, called his own dogs to heel, but the mastiff did not notice them; he kept snuffing about as though he had lost his master, and then set off in a long, swinging gallop towards Brosedale.

Wilton, deep in thought, went on to the brae he so often visited in the commencement of his stay at Glenravon. He had not long quitted the high road, when he perceived a well-known figure, as usual clothed in grey, walking rather slowly before him, and looking wonderfully in accordance with the soft, neutral tints of sky and stones, and hill-side—it was one of those still, mild, winter days, that have in them something of the tenderness and resignation of old age; and which, in our variable climate, sometimes come with a startling change of atmosphere immediately after severe cold. As he hastened to overtake her, Wilton fancied her step was less firm and elastic than usual; that her head drooped slightly as if depressed; yet there was a little more colour than was ordinary in her cheek, and certainly an expression of pleasure in her eyes that made his heart beat when she turned at his salutation. She wore a small turban hat of black velvet, with a

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rosette in front, which looked Spanish, and most becoming to her dark eyes and pale, refined face.

"At last, Miss Rivers! I thought you must have abjured this brae since Moncrief and myself became temporary proprietors. I began to fear I should never meet you out of doors again."

"I have not been out for a long time alone," she replied; "but to-day some great man from London, a doctor, was to see poor Donald, and I was free for a while, so I rambled away far up that hill-side. It was delightful—so still, so grave, so soft."

"You have been up the hill," cried Wilton, infinitely annoyed to think he had been lounging in the house when he might have had a long walk with her. "I wish I had been with you. It doubles one's enjoyment of scenery to look at it with a thorough artist like yourself."

Miss Rivers did not reply at once, but, after a moment's pause, asked, "Are you going out now to shoot?"

"Well, yes—at least it is my first appearance to-day."

"Would it be very inconvenient to you to walk back to Brosedale, or part of the way, with me?" She spoke with a slight, graceful hesitation.

"Inconvenient! No, certainly not," returned Wilton, trying to keep his eyes and voice from expressing too plainly the joy her request gave him. "It is a charity to employ me. You know I have lost my chum, Major Moncrief, and I feel somewhat adrift. But I thought young Fergusson was better. Miss Saville said so."

Miss Rivers shook her head. "They know nothing about it. He will never be better; but it is not because he is worse that this great doctor comes. He pays periodical visits. Donald always suffers; and I think he frets because his step-sisters and that cousin of yours come and sketch and talk in our room so often: it does him no good."

"Am I wrong in interpreting your emphasis on '*that* cousin of yours' as an unfavourable expression?"

"Do you like him?" she asked, looking straight into his eyes.

"No," replied Wilton, uncompromisingly; while he gave back her gaze with interest.

"It is curious," she said, musingly, "for he never offends. He is accomplished; his voice is pleasant. Why do you not like him?"

"I cannot tell. Why don't you?"

"Ah, it is different. I—I am foolish, perhaps, to be so influenced by unreasoning instinct; but I fancy—I feel—he is—not true. Are you really kinsmen?—of the same race, the same blood?"

"Yes, I believe so! And may I infer from your question that you believe I am tolerably honest—beyond deserving to be entrusted with the forks and spoons, I mean?"

"I do—I do, indeed." She spoke quite earnestly, and the words

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made Wilton's heart beat. Before, however, he had time to reply, a gentleman came round an angle of broken bank, crowned by a group of mountain ash, which in summer formed a very picturesque point, and to Wilton's great surprise he found himself face to face with St. George. Involuntarily he looked at Ella Rivers, but she seemed not in the least astonished: rather cold and collected. Suddenly it flashed into his mind that she had asked his escort to avoid a *tête-à-tête* with the agreeable *attaché*, with a crowd of associated inferences not calculated to increase his cousinly regard. St. George raised his hat with a gentle smile.

"I did not expect to have the pleasure of meeting you, Colonel, though I had intended paying you a visit. Miss Rivers, one has seldom a chance of finding you so far afield. I presume it is a favourable indication of the young laird's health that you can be spared to enjoy a ramble with Colonel Wilton."

There was just the suspicion of a sneer about his lips as he spoke, which completed the measure of Wilton's indignation. But Miss Rivers replied with the most unmoved composure that Donald was as usual, and then walked on in silence. After a few remarks, very shortly answered by Wilton, the bland *attaché* accepted his defeat.

"Did you see a large brown dog along here? I had the brute with me this morning, and he has strayed. I do not like to return without him, for he is rather a favourite with Sir Peter."

"Yes, I saw him just now further up the road, close to my gate," returned Wilton quickly, without adding what direction the animal had taken.

"Thank you. Then I will prosecute my search instead of spoiling your *tête-à-tête*"—with which parting-shot St. George left them.

For some paces Wilton and his companion walked on in silence. He stole a glance at her face; it was composed and thoughtful. "I suppose you were not surprised by that apparition? Perhaps it was a choice of the smaller evil that induced you to adopt a *tête-à-tête* with me, instead of with him?" He looked earnestly for her reply.

"It was," she said, without raising her eyes to his. "He passed me just now in the dog-cart with another gentleman, and I thought it possible he might return; so, as you have always been kind and friendly, I thought I might ask you to come with me."

Another pause ensued, for Wilton's heated imagination conjured up an array of serious annoyances deserving the severest castigation, and he scarcely dared trust himself to speak, so fearful was he of checking her confidence, or seeming to guess too much of the truth. At last he exclaimed, with a sort of suppressed vehemence that startled Miss Rivers into looking at him quickly, "By heaven, it is too bad that you should be bored, in your rare moments of freedom, with the idle chatter of that fellow."

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"It is a bore, but that is all. It amuses him to speak Italian with me." An expression of superb disdain gleamed over her face for an instant, and left it quiet and grave. "Though wonderfully civil, even complimentary, he conveys more than any one I ever met, the hatefulness of class distinctions."

"I feel deeply thankful for the doubt you expressed just now that he belonged to the same race as myself."

"You are quite different; but I dare say you have plenty of the prejudices peculiar to your caste."

"I wish you would undertake my conversion. It might not be so difficult. Your denunciation of soldiers has rung in my ears—no—rather haunted my imagination, ever since you showed me your sketch-book in that desolate waiting-room."

"I remember," said she, gravely. "No, I shall never convert you, even if I wrote a political thesis for your benefit." After a short pause, she resumed abruptly, "Do you know, I fear poor Donald has not much of life before him."

"Indeed! What induces you to think so?"

"He is so weak and feverish and sleepless. He often rings for me to read to him in the dead of the night. And then, with all his ill-temper and selfishness, he has at times such gleams of noble thought, such flashes of intellectual light, that I cannot help feeling it is the flicker of the dying lamp. I shall be profoundly grieved when his sad, blighted life is over. No one knows him as I do; and no one cares for me as he does. I have ventured to speak to Lady Fergusson, but she cannot or will not see, and forbids my addressing Sir Peter on the subject."

"And if this unfortunate boy dies, what is to become of you?" asked Wilton, too deeply interested to choose his words, yet a little apprehensive lest he might offend.

"I do not know; I have never thought," she replied, quite naturally. "I suppose I should go back to Mrs. Kershaw. She is fond of me in her way, especially since I nursed her through that fever."

"And then," persisted Wilton, looking earnestly at her half-averted face with an expression which, had she turned and caught it, would probably have destroyed the pleasant, friendly tone of their intercourse.

"I do not know; but I do not dread work. To do honest service is no degradation to me. I have always heard of work as the true religion of humanity. No. I have very little fear of the future, because, perhaps, I have so little hope."

"You are a strange girl," exclaimed Wilton, with a certain degree of familiarity, which yet was perfectly respectful. "I fancy few men have so much pluck. I dare say Lady Fergusson would not like to lose so charming a companion for her daughters."

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"Lady Fergusson does not think me at all charming; and Miss Saville does not like me, nor I her. But whether they like it or not, I shall not remain if Donald dies.

"Mrs. Kershaw is the person in whose house your father died," said Wilton softly, and in the same confidential tone their conversation had taken.

Miss Rivers bent her head.

"Where does she live?"

"At Kensington."

"Whereabouts? I know Kensington pretty well."

"Oh! in H—— Street. There is a little garden in front, so it is called Gothic Villa, though there is very little that is Gothic about it." Here Miss Rivers stopped.

"Yes!" exclaimed Wilton; "I see we are within the Brosedale boundaries; but you must not dismiss your escort yet; that diplomatic relative of mine may be on our heels."

"Do not imagine I fear to encounter him," said she, with an arch smile. "I ought, perhaps, to apologise to you for taking you out of your way for so slight a cause; but even if a fly alights on one's brow or hand, the impulse is to brush it away,"

"Do not dismiss me so soon, however. I am going away the day after to-morrow, and may not see you again before I leave."

"You are going! I am sorry." She spoke with a simple sincerity that at once charmed, and yet mortified him.

"You have always seemed more like an old friend than a stranger," she continued; "and I shall miss you."

"If I could be of the smallest use—the slightest comfort to you," said Wilton—his tones deepening unconsciously while he drew nearer to her, feeling still fearful of awakening any consciousness of the passionate feeling with which he regarded her—"I would willingly renounce my visit to A——; but I am only going there for a few days, and hope to return in time for some entertainment which is to take place in honour of Sir Peter's birthday."

"Oh, yes; it was the same last year. A ball for the near neighbours and tenants and dwellers in the house. I had no heart to see the last, but I have promised Isabel to be present at this."

"Indeed, then, pray, make another promise—to dance with me."

"Yes; I will dance with you, if you remember about it, and come to claim me."

"If!" repeated Wilton, with eloquent emphasis; "if I am in life you will see me there, even though I risked another railway smash to keep the tryst."

There was a fervour and depth in his voice beyond what the mere words required that struck his companion. She turned to him with a startled, wondering expression in her eyes, which met his fully for a

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moment, and then sank slowly, while a faint, flitting blush came and went on her cheek, the sweet curved lips quivered, and an unmistakable look of pain and gravity stole over her face. Wilton was ready to curse his own want of self-control for thus disturbing her, and yet this touch of emotion and consciousness completed the potent spell she had laid upon him. He burned to complete with his lips the confession his eyes had begun, but he must not, dare not then; so, with an immense effort over himself, he managed to say somewhat at random, "I suppose they have a good band—good enough to dance to?"

"Yes, I believe so;" and then again she stood still. "You have come quite far enough. I must say good-bye. I do not wish to take you any further." She again raised her eyes to his with a sort of effort, but gravely and resolutely.

"I obey," replied Wilton as gravely, all anxiety to win her back to her former easy, confidential tone: he raised his hat, and looked in vain for a movement on her side to hold out her hand. "Then I may count on you for the first waltz at the birthday fête. I shall come for it, rest assured; so remember if you let St. George or any one else persuade you to break your promises, the results may be—fatal." He endeavoured to assume a light tone, but could not judge of its effect, for Miss Rivers merely said in a low voice, "Good-bye. I shall not forget."

Wilton sought for another glance in vain. She bent her head as he stood aside to let her pass, and vanished quickly among the trees.

The walk back was accomplished almost unconsciously, so deeply was Wilton absorbed in thought. Involuntarily he had torn away the veil which had hitherto hidden the real character of their intercourse from that proud, frank, simple girl, and how would she take it? With a woman of her calibre anything like indirectness, of parleying with generous impulses, would consign him to the limbo of her contempt; and the grand scorn of her face when she spoke of St. George Wilton amusing himself with her flashed back upon him. Of that he could not bear to think, nor of giving her up and seeking safety in flight, nor of tormenting himself by hanging about her vaguely. There was but one way out of it all—wild, imprudent, insane as it must appear, even to decent worldlings like Moncrief—and that was to go in gallantly and dauntlessly for marriage at all risks. Wilton's pulses throbbed at the idea: once certain of himself and his motives, he felt that he could break down any barrier of reserve Ella Rivers might erect against him.

In this mood the next day's dinner at Brosedale was a great trial, though he felt a slight increase of friendliness towards St. George, who had evidently held his tongue about their rencontre. All passed over serenely, and promising faithfully to return in time for the ball, he bid the Brosedale party "good-night."

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TEMPLE BAR.

APRIL 1875.

Leah: a Woman of Fashion.

By MRS. EDWARDES,
Author of 'Ought We to Visit Her?' 'Archie Lovell,' etc.

Chapter XVII.

IN THE ATELIER.

THE atelier is on the third floor; a slip of a room, all outer wall and skylight, too hot for habitation in summer, too cold in winter, and mysteriously called by Bonchrétien "the Observatory." In the days when Madame's resources did not enable her to rent the entire house, a photographer used to carry on his business in this room, and the smell of collodion clings, even yet, to the walls. The smell of collodion will be likely to cleave to Leah Pascal's remembrance while she lives!

Precisely as midnight strikes, M. Danton quits his chamber: Bonchrétien, muffled up in an old grey camisole, nightcap on head, sees and wishes him good night, a quarter of an hour later, as he stands, a cigarette between his fingers, at the half-open door of the atelier.

"Bon soir to my dear M. Danton—star-gazing as usual! Ah, my poor friend, you discover St. Pierre to pay St. Paul! As much wisdom can be had of our pillow as of our brains." And sending him a little kiss from her finger-tips, Madame, without a suspicion, shuffles away; economical even of time, muttering her prayers as she goes to her roost under the leads.

Twelve o'clock. Half-past twelve. One. Danton listens as the city clocks strike the half-hours, smokes cigarette after cigarette, occasionally gives vent to his impatience by noiselessly pacing up and down the narrow floor of the atelier. At last, when considerably more than an hour has gone by, he is rewarded by seeing the glimmer of a light upon the opposite wall—another minute, and a white-clad figure glides rapidly across the open space at the summit of the stairs, and passes into the room occupied by little Deb and Naomi Pascal.

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To gain her own apartment, which is at the extreme end of the corridor, Leah will be forced to pass the door of the atelier. Let her purpose to give him an interview or no, she must, of necessity, find herself once more face to face with Danton alone. "The last words of the romance" will be spoken, and in quite plain tones, with no softening down whatsoever of unpalatable truth. Never was man less disposed for euphemistic gallantry of any kind than is Eugene Danton at this moment.

She leaves the children's room, walks slowly, with a face set and white as stone, along the corridor. The door of the atelier is in shadow; the atelier, itself, illumined in part only by the moon shining through the skylight. Leah carries a candle in her hand, so Danton, unseen himself, can watch her clearly. She reaches the door —pauses: then, as if moved by a sudden impulse, pushes it back upon its hinges and enters. They stand, and for several seconds look at each other without a word. Leah speaks first.

"You asked me to come, and I am here. It must be an intense pleasure for you to hear how much I hate you that you should still throw yourself in my way!"

I have said that her face is white, and set as stone. As she addresses him, a spot of colour mounts on either cheek; the red glow of passion kindles in her deep-set eyes.

"Hate is not the word," she goes on, her voice sinking to a whisper, yet gaining in power as it sinks. "I loathe you! I loathe myself for having put it in your power to make me suffer."

Still Danton stands before her, silent, and tolerably collected; the cigarette, which up to the moment of her entrance he was smoking, between his fingers. At the sight of that cigarette, Leah's wrath waxes fiercer and fiercer. Women judge by such trifles—alas! their lives are made up of such trifles! Any man, lover or not, who had to wait an hour and a half in the cold, would take out his tobacco-pouch as naturally, as mechanically, as he would draw breath. To Leah that cigarette is a crime; an added insult, deadly and premeditated, to all the injuries that Danton has already wrought her.

"Do you know, sir," so she breaks forth next, "in spite of your airy indifference, that I look upon you as the very greatest scoundrel in the world? I am only a girl. My words cannot hurt you. I wish that I were a man to make them plainer."

"Do you know," says Danton, speaking for the first time, "that though you have broken your faith to me shamelessly, tossed me aside like an old glove, I love you better than I ever loved you yet at this moment?"

"Love? The word from your lips is an insult. Why, but for you——" And then she falters, breaks down, half turns as if to go —but remains.

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"But for me, you would be a vast deal happier than you are, Leah. That is the truth, is it not? My poor little Leah—it must have been so hard for you to suffer, with no one at hand to give you consolation."

"I have many people to give me consolation, I thank you, M. Danton. If I have suffered, and I have!—I am not ashamed to say how much your treachery has cost me—the wound will not last for life, be quite sure. I am not the sort of woman to break my heart because one more man in the world has proved himself a villain."

"You are not the sort of woman to break your heart for any cause," says Danton. In the days to come it may be that he will think twice of that remark of his. "The human beings, if any such exist, who break their hearts, are those who love. And it is not in you to care two straws for any man. Why, if you had liked me," he goes on, warming, "as many women like for eight days, knowing that at the end of eight days 'twill be past, you would have defended me when I was absent, have given me the chance, at least, of self-defence."

"I—I presume you know that I have heard of your marriage," she answers; but in a voice that falters more and more. Already the ground seems slipping from beneath her feet; Danton's stronger will, Danton's absolute truth, begin to assert themselves.

"And what if you have? You know, can know nothing about the circumstances of my life, past or present. The promises of love you made last night in the Tuileries gardens were to *me*, without conditions. An accident that blackened my life a dozen years ago—the mere fact of my marriage—is altogether beside the question of our love for each other."

The fact of your marriage . . . . beside the question!" she stammers. Odd contradiction! Though the boldness of his speech shakes every prejudice Leah has to its foundation, she feels her pride unwounded. Many a love speech from the lips of her affianced husband has humiliated her more. "If you are going to speak in this *awful, irreligious* manner," putting down her candle on the solitary table the room contains, "I shall feel it my duty to leave you at once."

"You will remain here, Miss Pascal," says Danton firmly, "until we have had our last say to each other out."

"Our last say," she repeats, looking at him with vaguely wistful entreaty in her eyes.

"Yes, our very last; as regards explanation, at all events. Probably our last of any kind in this world. Well, we shall not be able to finish it in a dozen, or in twice a dozen words—and you are too thinly dressed to be here, my poor love." He comes to Leah's side abruptly, and throws his arms round her. "Why, you are trembling, and your hands," taking one of them as he speaks in his, and

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holding it close, "are on fire. What have you been doing with yourself since you left the drawing-room?"

"I—oh, M. Danton, how frightfully wrong all this is! I will not stay with you one moment longer—I have been talking to my cousin, Mrs. Baltimore."

"A good counsellor, on my word—Mrs. Baltimore! Will the day ever come, Leah, when I shall see you tortured out of nature, artificial in look and word, plastered soul and body, an inch thick in paint, a woman of fashion, like Mrs. Baltimore? Or so much lower, as your capacity for better things is greater!"

"You will see me, as you see poor Bell, as you see all women, much as life and as men's selfishness make us," says Leah, with bitterness, and breaking as she speaks from Danton's arm. "Take my case, as you are so deeply interested in it. Look at my papa;" her tone, her face, supply the place of adjectives. "Look at my future husband! Look at my best friend, my lover, as he called himself yesterday! If at Bell's age I have turned out half as well as she has, it will be a great surprise to myself, M. Danton. That is all I have to say."

Her warmth almost rekindles Danton's hopes. When a woman extenuates herself to the man who loves her, she betrays this much, at least, that she values his respect; just the very next step to valuing himself. "Do you mind remaining here for a few seconds, without me, Miss Pascal, long enough merely for me to go to my room and back? And for precaution," suiting the action to the word, "I will extinguish the candle. The moon gives us more than enough light to talk by. Now, don't stir an inch till I return."

And with this Leah finds herself alone; bewildered, stunned, conscious, as far as reason can inform her, that Danton is wrong, she right; yet feeling, through some intuition acuter than reason, that he stands on loftier ground than she, that her best chance of happiness, even yet, rests on obeying him! At the end of about a minute and a half he returns, loaded; his warm travelling plaid to be pinned (he pins it himself) round her shoulders, a tiger skin for her feet. On one side of the atelier is a kind of recess or embrasure, wherein, no doubt, stood formerly a broken column, or other piece of photographic property. It is furnished with a low broad ledge, just spacious enough to form a resting-place for one person. And here Leah is placed. I employ the passive voice intentionally: what action of Leah Pascal's but must be passive so long as she is with Danton? Her delicate Jewish features show fair in the moonlight above the opaque shadows of the plaid; her diamond rings sparkle, in green and ruby fire, that contrasts and yet assimilates curiously with the mottled richness of the tiger skin upon which her fingers rest. Danton takes up his position at her feet. In novels, Leah has read, probably some

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[illegible]undred tim[illegible]ore, of lovers thus placed. In real life the experience is n[illegible] Imagine a Lord Stair, or a Jack Chamberlayne —imagine [illegible]ish admirer she has had, and the list is long—planted, T[illegible]ion, on a bare parquet, yet not looking ridiculous! To Dant[illegible]h his artistic southern face, his entire absence of self-[illegible]onscious[illegible]he position seems at once natural and full of ease. He [illegible]eans his [illegible]d back against the opposite side of the embrasure, and gazes at her.

"You are the prettiest woman I ever saw in my life, Miss Pascal. I don't believe I have paid you many compliments hitherto, so you must excuse this very broad one."

"Compliments are not the road to my favour," says Leah, sharply. She is palpitating with sudden pleasure. No assurance of his love could have affected her to half the same extent as this unexpected appeal to vanity. "I have heard too many of them, I can assure you, not to know their worth."

"I was not thinking of your favour," says Danton. "As you sat there, partly in shadow, yet with the light upon your face and hands, I *felt* your beauty, all at once, as one might feel a wild new chord in music, struck without prelude. I will never recur to the objectionable subject again, if you desire it."

She smiles, in spite of herself; that sweet, half-mournful smile that deadened his reason from the first, and Danton in a second has approached nearer, is holding her hands in his.

"Before I begin my explanation, Leah, my history rather—such a history as it is—say that you were in earnest last night? Tell me that, however the remaining thirty or forty years of our lives may be passed, for a couple of hours or so you cheated yourself into thinking that you loved me?"

"Your question does not deserve an answer, M. Danton. Cheated myself into thinking! If I had not been too sincere, too foolishly, fatally in earnest, should I ever have gone through the hours of horrible torture I did last night? Why, since I was born," Leah's eyes suffuse with self-pity, the most genuine, always, of her emotions, "I never suffered one quarter what I have done since I heard the truth about you."

"And if you had not heard 'the truth,' as you call it, you believe that you would have remained faithful to your word—would have deliberately chosen poverty and myself, instead of Mr. Chamberlayne and riches?"

Leah shifts uneasily from his gaze. This question that Danton has put so plainly was asked her by her own conscience, not once, but a score of times, during the tortured watches of the night. The knowledge of his marriage has stabbed her pride, has crushed, and at the same time brought forth, whatever genuine aroma of love was latent

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in her fancy for him. Has it really influenced her fate? Did she ever absolutely purpose to break off her engagement to Jack Chamberlayne, put aside the purple and fine linen of affluence, and step forth, in the desolate world of poverty, as Danton's wife?

"Considering our position towards each other, would it not be more delicate for you to leave that question unasked, M. Danton?" So, at length, she replies. Were Bell Baltimore acting as prompter, the words could scarcely be better chosen. "In meeting you here to-night I have sufficiently forgotten what I owe to myself—and others. You might have the forbearance to ask no more."

"I have no forbearance at all," exclaims Danton. "I am selfish in this matter, through and through, thinking of myself and of the years that lie before me"—this with an involuntary sadness in his voice—"not of you. Leah, give me your hand, so—and tell me, before you hear a word of my explanation, that for about one hour-and-a-half you believed you loved me?"

"Believed I loved you!" Ah, heaven, that you can look back and doubt my sincerity!"

And Danton presses for no other answer.

Chapter XVIII.

THE LAST WORDS OF THE ROMANCE.

"A well-known French writer," says Danton, "classifies wedded happiness, neatly, French fashion, under four heads: 'Acquaintance, three weeks; love, three months; war, three years; toleration, thirty years.' My experience fell short of the stage of war by just three days. I married Madeleine Frère on October the fifth, and on January the second, as a kind of new year's gift, perhaps, I don't know whether she bore the season in mind, she gave me back my freedom, a score or two of my own love letters, and a locket containing my photograph. Other jewelry, of a more directly marketable value, she carried with her, by instinct, I verily believe, rather than calculation. Madeleine could no more resist the magnetism of rings and bracelets than can the insects on a summer night withstand glare. Until the singed wings are powerless to flutter more, the moth goes back to the candle; until the frail, sordid heart lay still in death, Madeleine craved feverishly, ceaselessly, for the baubles which had been her ruin.

"She was tall, my Leah, somewhat above your stature, erect, fair of skin, though dark-eyed, and with the divinest look of soul upon her lips and brow that ever shone from woman's face. Her hair and yours might be silk cut from the same piece, unless, indeed, hers was endowed with one shade more of gold. I am not sure about that. To look back across eleven years would give a shade more gold to

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most things—and it is eleven years exactly since Madeleine Frère became my wife."

"Eleven years," repeats Leah, slowly. "Why you were a child, a schoolboy, when you married, then?"

"I was an undergraduate at Oxford, a theological student—ah, you may well look surprised!—with a fine fat midland living before me as the final goal of my ambition."

"A fine English living, M. Danton? You?"

"Computed value, eighteen hundred a year, excellent glebe, good society, and two packs of hounds in the neighbourhood. It was the living Madeleine Frère married, not me, as I discovered too late. Well, before coming to Madeleine at all, I ought to tell you in a dozen words what my own youth had been . . . But are you warm enough, my love? Pull the plaid closer round your throat—there! And now turn, so that I may not lose one hair's breadth of your face. I am greedy of looking at your beauty, Leah—the chances, in spite of my explanation, are so widely against my being the possessor of it on this side of the grave."

Leah's eyes glisten in the moonlight; her face softens to as lovely a tenderness as it wore last night under the chestnut trees. "If I have condemned you too hastily, you—you will at least forgive me, M. Danton? Oh, what a difficult thing it is to know what duty is!"

"Especially when duty and inclination are ready to clasp hands. Leah," he proceeds abruptly, "you will marry Mr. Chamberlayne on Wednesday. The story I am going to tell you will not hinder that, although it may serve, in other ways, as a homily, perhaps. You will marry Mr. Chamberlayne on Wednesday."

She makes no answer, only bows her head, in a graceful little pose of abandonment upon her breast, and sighs. The jewel-clasp at her throat sparkles for one moment like the keen eye of some living creature, then sinks again into obscurity with the sigh.

"And still I am fool enough, as I look at you, to hope—yes, with certainty staring me grim and unrelenting in the face. Don't grudge me my half-hour's folly—'twill be paid for dearly enough some day, depend upon it. Now to my story.

"My father, Leah, died when I was a child of eleven; my mother five years later. At sixteen, here in Paris, I stood absolutely alone in the world, with a couple of hundred francs, and a schoolboy's knowledge of classics and mathematics standing between me and starvation. How was I to live? My mother had supported us both by giving English lessons since my father's death, and out of her poor earnings had contrived to send me as a day scholar to the College of St. Barbe. But of what use was my education? How could a friendless lad of sixteen convert classics and mathematics into bread? I was too fine

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to be an errand boy, too proud to beg, fitted, as it seemed, for nothing unless it were a plunge from one of the bridges into the Seine, and then the Morgue!

"Carrying out these ideas, on a certain winter's night, as I sauntered, chill and solitary, along the Quai Voltaire, a girl, about three years older than myself, accosted me; laying a little not over clean hand upon my shoulder as she spoke. 'You regard the water too much, child,' she said, kindly. 'I used to do it once myself—pah!' with a shudder; 'get pretty black notions by that practice, I can tell you. Now just come with me, and I will show you things better worth looking at than this slimy bed.' She was the daughter of one of the property-men at the Variétés, herself a chorus-girl at another smaller theatre, and—well, not a person to whom you or Mrs. Baltimore would care to speak. But she was my salvation."

"And you loved each other," remarks Leah, coldly. "Fine disinterested conduct, from *persons of that sort*, must naturally end in one stereotyped way!"

"Well, yes, we loved each other," answers Danton. "And what is more, we love each other still. It was my poor Annette, now the mother of half-a-dozen children, who sent me my fruit and flowers yesterday. Did I not say 'twas well you should not know through what hands those roses had passed? Annette and her children are the scandalous characters with whom my friend Mr. Pettingall has seen me in the Bois de Boulogne on a Sunday."

"Mr. Pettingall thinks like the rest of the world," cries Leah, whose code of social prejudice is narrow as the Prince Charming's own. "This is really not a narrative to which I can listen with sympathy, M. Danton."

"I am sure that it is not, Miss Pascal. But you see, if I were to tell you a history of silks and satins, and transcendental virtue, the moral might be fine—but it would not be the history of my life!

"Annette, I repeat, was my salvation. At the age I speak of, sixteen, I scarcely looked older than other children of twelve. I had lived with my mother from the day of my birth until her death, and some lingering aroma of her companionship seemed to cling to me, long after I was left to buffet alone with want and despair upon the streets of Paris. Annette got me a little place in the theatre where she worked, my salary about enough to find me in dry bread; and helped first by one of those poor artists, then another, I contrived to live, the Seine and the Morgue forgotten, for more than a twelvemonth: not the unhappiest twelvemonth of my life. Then came a change of fortune—abrupt, overwhelming. An uncle upon my mother's side lost his son, a youth at college, destined for holy orders—I mean for the grand family living in the midland counties—and I, the only other representative of the new generation, was remembered.

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My uncle found me out, here in Paris, snatched me, to use his own expression, as a brand from the burning, and sent me for a couple of years to a public school, 'to make an Englishman of me;' then to a tutor's in the neighbourhood of London, to be prepared for Oxford.

"The tutor was facile, as tutors to lads of tolerable prospects are apt to be. Our hours of work over, and we were free, following the tutor's example, to run up to town and frequent whatever society, taste whatever pleasures suited us best. He had six pupils at the time, and four out of those six went to the mischief, the brand snatched from the burning among them! Unhappily, while the rest only ruined themselves boy fashion, for the time being, the young fool, Eugène Danton, contrived to hang a millstone round his neck for life. When I entered Oxford I was formally engaged to Madeleine Frère. On the day I was twenty-one she became my wife.

"My uncle at first was furious, threatened to make me the beggar he had found me, and to send me back to what he was pleased to call 'my perdition' in Paris. Then Madeleine, in a happy inspiration, having thrown herself at his feet, he softened. What man, young or old, could she not soften when she chose? Nothing was to be said against the girl personally. She was of decent birth and antecedents, beautiful, passionately attached to her husband—to me! As I had chosen to make a fool of myself by marrying at all, it was a subject for wonder, perhaps, considering my character, that I had not chosen worse. And then, Leah, came that 'three months' love' of which the Frenchman writes."

"The three months' love of which, after all these years, and frail and sordid though your Madeleine was, you can scarcely bring your voice to speak of!" exclaims Leah, bitterly. "Ah, to command infatuation like that, the worse a woman is, the better her chance. And then men speak to us of their ideals!"

"It is a subject we may as well not discuss now," says Danton, a little gravely. "Madeleine was beautiful, and I—a fool. The history, in six words, of a good many other love matches before and since. However that may be, the duration of the 'infatuation' was short. Before we had been married a month, the train was already laid that should divide us, needing but the chance spark, that opportunity is never slow of bringing, to fire it.

"I am telling you of facts only, Leah. The night wears on. I will not rob you of the sleep you need so sorely by one word more of detail than is needed. Before Madeleine had been my wife a month, I confided to her a secret, at that time more important to me than the wealth of all the empires in Europe, and in return received . . . a blank frozen look of contempt, a curl of the exquisite lip, an answer which, basely commonplace though it was, burnt itself into my recollection for ever.

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"Doubts—vacillation? For my secret was no more than this, Leah, that I had become convinced of my own unfitness to be a teacher of spiritual truths to others. And pray what mattered this? Did half the clergymen going believe what they preach from their pulpits? Were lawyers sincere—or doctors? Was any one sincere, for the matter of that! Unless I wished her to think that she had been cruelly duped, that she had married a man devoid alike of brain and principle, my lovely sympathetic Madeleine desired, the flush of sordid passion on her face, that I would never talk such trash as 'incurring beggary for conviction's sake' in her presence. People without fixed opinions might be very admirable in their own conceit; but fixed opinions were the things that *paid*. I had not the right, morally, if it came to such fine talking, to ruin her, whatever I might do as regarded myself.

"In a word, she had married the living in the midland counties, value eighteen hundred a year—not me. Her anger, now that I can view it from a just perspective, was natural. What were abstract questions, nice perplexities, abhorrence of moral dishonesty, to a creature whose world was comprised in silk dresses, trinkets, a visiting list and a carriage! But then, at one-and-twenty, and an enthusiast, my disappointment was pretty much what a man's might be who should find himself tied, soul and body, not to a living woman, but a corpse. Madeleine, with her radiant hair (the shade of yours, my Leah), and her eyes and lips, was a corpse, livid, corrupt, the moment you touched her soul. And it was not in me then, or at any time in my life, to love, as some men can, the outward shell of a woman, leaving heart and intellect alone. I answered her; the fire that was in me piercing through words I vainly strove to render temperate. And in that hour—aye, as we stood there, face to face, I believe her determination of leaving me was taken. The temptation had existed already." Even in the pallid moonlight Leah can see how Danton's cheek becomes a shade more pale. "But the prospective midland living had counterbalanced it. On such slender threads is the destiny of human lives balanced! Perdition staved off by the mere prospective contemplation of a midland living, with glebe worth so much, and good society, and a couple of packs of hounds in the neighbourhood!

"One of the men with whom I had read at the facile tutor's, a Lord ——, well, let his name alone, Lord Lucre, we will call him, had long admired Madeleine; in the days before I ever knew her, as I learned afterwards. This man, two or three years older than myself, was, at heart, a cynic of fifty, a sceptic, believing only in the fact that nature had endowed him with certain capacities for enjoyment, and fortune placed it within his means to gratify them at will. And he understood Madeleine to perfection: by natural affinity, I suppose; he had not brain sufficient for insight into character. No fine

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attentions did he waste on her, none of the sentimental claptrap by which some cleverer men might seek to win a woman from her allegiance. He offered her from the beginning—Bracelets, of solid eighteen-carat gold, possessing a certain fixed market value; and no other eloquence was needed.

"On the evening when you essayed your diamonds for my benefit," goes on Danton, "you wore a brown silk dress, my Leah, with yellow ribbon in your hair, and a bunch of violets at your breast. Do you think every smallest detail of that scene is not graven on my heart for ever? Well, as I entered the room, as you turned, a jewel-case in your hand, and looked at me, all I saw was Madeleine. The first gift of value that she got from my lord came anonymously, and in her pleasure over its reception, pure pleasure over the bauble unconnected with the possible sender, she looked as you looked with Mr. Chamberlayne's diamonds in your hand. 'Eugène, to think that any one should be so generous! A bracelet, set with all these rich diamonds, for me.' I was musing of her voice, her face, of a hundred memories your likeness to her had stirred, when Deb, you may remember, told me I looked like Lazarus. From this time forth Madeleine's stock of trinkets continued to increase steadily. At last I discovered, what every one in Oxford knew before me, the donor's name, and insisted, peremptorily, upon the whole of the presents being returned, and the intimacy broken off.

"Madeleine listened to me quietly. 'What you say is well said, Eugène.' This, or something like this, was her answer. 'I should respect you less if you could endure to see me wearing jewels that should have come from your hand, not a stranger's. I will return my lord his presents. I will swear never to speak to my lord again, on one condition—that you will not utter another syllable about your "conscientious scruples" in matters of faith while you live. Surely this is a trifling concession for you to make?'"

"Then I say that she had no woman's heart within her breast," cries Leah. "A true woman would sooner die than see the man she loved depart, by half-an-inch, from honour!"

Reader, is this claptrap or real? A week, four-and-twenty hours ago, would not Leah Pascal, placed in the same position, have spoken in Madeleine's very words? I, who write her history, know not. Love's transformations are rapid. Twenty-four hours of the passion, in its essence, will suffice to change clay to gold, uplift us out of ourselves to the level of that which we love as though by miracle. And to nearly all women 'tis given to feel noble, vicariously. Nearly all women have moral insight sufficient to pierce through the frivolous motives, the sordid casuistry of a weaker sister.

"Madeleine spoke simply and unconsciously as she felt," replies Danton. "One merit, if merit it may be called, she possessed to no

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common degree—transparency. She was literally too shallow, both of brain and heart, to be anything but transparent! Would I, or would I not—just before she packed up my lord's trinkets—give her this promise, make the 'trifling concession' of enduring an existence which should be one monstrous out-crying, living lie from that day forth until I died?

"It was a moment of agony to me, Leah, such as no actual after disgrace had power to inflict. It is hard for a man to avow that he has been ever minded, Judas-like, to sell his own soul, and still—as Madeleine stood there, in her slender delicate beauty, her soft eyes fixed on me, the flush of excitement on her cheeks, well—for one single, shameful instant, I must confess to you that I hesitated. She held what to a lad of one-and-twenty is more than life, she held my honour between those little trembling white hands. I thought of the world, of the place given to successful charlatanism in its ranks, of the midland living, of my duties, my sermons. And then—then the darkest moment, the worst temptation of my life, passed away from me," exclaims Danton, "and I answered her. There were other ways of advancement besides the pulpit. So I tried, indirectly, to soften my resolution. The education I had received might possibly be turned to account in science better than in theology. My inclinations tended towards science. Five years' work in the London hospitals, and as a surgeon——

"'Thank you for the prospect,' cried Madeleine, turning from me grandly. And make no mistake about it, Leah! At that instant she felt grandly; felt that I was the impostor, she the victim. 'Try all the professions, one after the other, and see the fine fortune, the position you will realise by them. As to my having faith in you! How am I, how is anyone, to believe in a man who does not believe in himself?

"The logic was unanswerable: I made no attempt to dispute it. How argue, on a matter of conscience, with a human creature in whose organisation conscience had no place? Of what Madeleine could taste, handle, above all wear, she could speak; oftentimes with a fluent, original little smartness that had charmed me. Of the inner life, its doubts, sorrows, consolations, she knew less than the man born blind knows of colour. You may convey images to the blind by analogy. The smell of violets, the hush of a summer night will give him some idea, if not ours, of purple-blue. Madeleine possessed literally no faculty that could lift her beyond the teaching of her own five senses. As the wife of a midland rector she might, had fate been kind to her, have lived out her span of days a contented Pharisee, and have merited any amount of tombstone eulogy hereafter. Let virtue be lucrative, and she was the very last woman breathing to be led astray by the roses and raptures of the other side. Brought face to

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face with poverty, and she made for riches as a starving man makes for food; instinctively, untroubled by moral misgivings or questioning of any kind.

"We said our last words to each other on a certain dismal January morning. The streets of Oxford, I remember, were dark with sleet and fog. By six o'clock that night I found myself alone!—dishonoured, as the world said and as I then thought—rid, I know now, of the perpetual temptation to dishonour, the degrading influence of a woman, to whom money was the supreme good, and honesty, independence, truth, all, my Leah, that makes this life of ours worth living for, dross."

Danton pauses, and, shrinking under his steady gaze, Leah bows her face. The degrading influence of a woman to whom money was the one supreme good! What is her supreme good? How came those diamonds on her fingers? At what altar will her spirit "stand passive, while the flesh is sold," eight and forty hours hence?

"Madeleine was punished, depend upon it," falteringly at last her lips give the answer that she knows he looks for. "Women are brought up to hate poverty. They don't hold their fate in their hands as men do—but be quite sure they are punished. Not a woman who sells her soul for a price but is tortured for it, even on this side the grave."

"Leah, my poor little love, don't defend the position. I know as well as you know what you feel. Don't pain yourself or me, by putting it into words. Madeleine acted—according to her lights we will say—and I was left free to work out my scheme of existence by what pattern I chose. Free in a world from whence all the fairest possibilities of human life had been blotted out, as far as I was personally concerned, for ever.

"Well, Leah, the conclusion of my story can be soon told. I worked out my scheme, by my own pattern, and now, at thirty years of age, am—what you see me. My hair, fast turning grey, and no particular certainty as to how I shall pay for my dinner the week after next. When my uncle first heard of my intention to abandon orthodoxy and the family living with it, he believed honestly and sincerely that I had lost my senses. Grief over my wife's misconduct must have turned my not over strong brain. Men thus circumstanced not unfrequently take to stimulants, conceive disgust towards the objects of their former ambition. So said the 'eminent mental practitioner' whom he consulted as to my case. When at length he discovered that I was neither mad nor drunk, he behaved like a gentleman; so much I must say for him; made me a present of a couple of hundred pounds, hoped if I had a spark of gratitude in me, that I would not disgrace the family openly, and requested, with an earnestness that touched me, that he might never look upon my face again. At the end of another six

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months he died, and enormously to the surprise of every one, of myself most of all, a further sum of one thousand pounds was left in his will 'to my nephew, Eugène Danton, who, with all his other vices, is not a hypocrite.'

"These twelve hundred pounds are, have been, rather, my fortune, a colossal one coming to me at the time they did, and with my disposition of mind. I went to London, I worked, I spent five years in the hospitals.

"At last, at six-and-twenty years old, I found myself with my face once more set in the direction of affluence. A West-end doctor, a celebrated specialist, wanted a partner, and having known something of me at Bartholomew's, offered to take me into his house; a chance as regards money that does not fall to one young surgeon, without either interest or money, out of a thousand. Well, and Madeleine's theory came true. People without fixed opinions may be very admirable in their own conceit, but fixed opinions are the things that pay. I found, as the day approached for me to sign the deed of partnership, that I was no more suited for a May Fair specialist than for a midland rector. An unctuous air of mystery, a solemn Tartuffe-face to show through a brougham window, the whole art of pressing woman's hand, unbounded charlatanism, in short—these were the qualifications needed of me; that and a house in Eaton Square, and a splendid balance at one's bankers. And I had them not.

"The partnership fell through, as my preparation for the church had done, and a fact exceedingly useful for a man to know impressed itself at the same time upon my mind. I was not destined for riches, not for popularity, not for what is called social success of any kind or degree.

"What was I destined for? In the first place for work; as without it I had neither food nor drink; in the next for work I could believe in, were such to be found. Impossible to disbelieve in the expediency of setting fractured bones or removing shattered limbs, provided the necessary art has been learnt to a man's best. I did not feel that in the London hospitals I had learnt surgery to my best. Two or three years in Paris, given exclusively to one class of labours, might, I thought, enable me to pass the remainder of my days as a bone-setter with decent satisfaction to myself and profit to others. And this is why you see me here. I earn just francs enough to pay Madame Bonchrétien for my food and shelter. My friends are the old ones of the theatre, who stood between me and the Morgue when I was a child. My hopes—no, I will not speak of these. Since I have known you, my hopes, my projects, all that concerns my future life, are changed."

"And Madeleine? You—you have heard of your wife recently, they say, and she is well."

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"Aye, well indeed—her sorrows and her sins alike ended. Mr. Pettingall told you, doubtless, how a letter of inquiry written by her fell, through singular accident, into his possession? In spite of all that was past and gone, Leah, that letter smote my heart. If Madeleine had had friends, money, health, *anything* in the shape of prosperity remaining, I knew she would not have remembered me. All bitterness against her, all resentment of the wrong she had wrought me, had died years before; and holding none of the world's opinions as to what might or might not be dignified conduct for a man in my position, I obeyed her wishes at once, and went to London.

"I found her alone, penniless, in the last grasp of disease; a homily upon earthly vanity such as I, for certain, could never have preached, had I attained to that midland pulpit. On the day she left me, that January morning, in Oxford, she was in the meridian of youth and health, flushed with the pride of life and with her own beauty. I found her faded, unsightly—as even the fairest woman can become from the reflection of the soul within—unrepentant to an extent that, if I had been less personally interested, would have made her case curious, as a mere study of mental perversity. Her life, she considered, had been unlucky. First, through my obstinacy in throwing up the church—by the hour together, with her sharp illogical logic, she would trace all her misfortunes back to this. Secondly, through the character of the man for whose protection she had abandoned me. Plenty of women had behaved worse than she had, from a moral point of view; but they had not had to do with a Lord Lucre! And then see how badly she had worn—a blonde, too. Other women of her colour kept their complexion and their hair till fifty. Had I succeeded? No. Unnecessary to ask the question. Had I money? Of course not. Fixed principles, as she told me once before, were the only means to riches. At least, had I enough to put her into a comfortable lodging, and give her food, wine, and a few decent clothes (she was too weak to stand up, but wanted silk dresses, trinkets, hairdresser's work to the last); lend her a helping hand—so with death's grasp upon her she would talk—until she was strong enough to go back to her own world, and shift for herself?

"I had enough to help her," proceeds Danton, after a moment's pause. "I got her a pretty lodging overlooking one of the parks, and was able even to satisfy her as regards ribbons and ornaments. She suffered little in body, nothing at all in spirit, and died like a child without ever taking to her bed. I saw her late one evening, together with an old hospital friend whom I had got to attend her professionally, and she was looking forward, in excellent spirits, to visiting the Vienna Exhibition. Half-a-dozen new dresses—of course I could give her these before I returned to Paris? and she would undertake to be the prettiest and most noticed woman in Vienna. . . .

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At eleven, next morning, my friend called round at her lodgings, a usual, and found her dead."

"Dead!" repeats Leah, in a broken voice. "Oh, if I had known this—if you had told me the whole truth, yourself, what agony I should have been spared!"

"You knew that I loved you," says Danton. "That truth told, and all minor details were unimportant."

"My having listened to words of love from a married man unimportant?"

"If you had loved me, you would have had faith in me," he exclaims. "Married or not married, bound or free—but why waste breath upon things that are over for ever? Leah, this telling of my history has brought us back precisely to where we stood last night, when the stars shone, do you remember, through the chestnuts in the Champs Elysées! You are engaged to marry Chamberlayne, Chamberlayne's riches rather, on Wednesday, and I, poor and obscure, say to you—Marry me! Break your promise, while to break it is honour, and in the year of grace eighteen hundred and seventy——, let the number of women who sell their love in the market be lessened by one."

The energy of despair is in Danton's voice, but no faintest ray of hope kindles at his heart. He knows, better than does Leah herself, how fixed is the fate of both. Could he take her by the hand at this moment, while passion softens her, and an invisible priest seal their union by miracle, they might be wed. Jack Chamberlayne's money actual and prospective, the magic might of all next Wednesday's millinery—these will Leah no more withstand than could Madeleine, a dozen years ago, withstand Lord Lucre's bracelets.

"You would be the most miserable man on earth if I married you, M. Danton. We—we care for each other, but how long does love last without means? I have seen that romance played out to the cruel end, remember, and ever since I was eight years old I have prayed, night and morning, to be delivered from poverty. Forget me. Find some one with a stouter, better nature than mine. I am no more worthy of you than was she whose story you have told me. I—oh, may God help me! *How* shall I pass all the long, long years before I die?"

And with that she breaks down, in utter abandonment, and Danton takes her in his arms. Gold and love. Alas, the old wild lament—that one may not have both! Alas! that this first, only man who has ever stirred that cold heart of hers with passion, should be a pauper, a dreaming enthusiast to whom even competency is impossible!

"Leah, give yourself, give me, another chance. Don't talk about unworthiness—any woman is worthy of any man, for the matter of that. I am not made of the stuff to be a millionaire, but never fear that I could earn you bread sufficient, yes, and a couple of silk dresses

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a-year. Put off your marriage, at least. Say you are ill. You are ill; I can give you a sick certificate with a good conscience, and gain breathing time. In another few days——"

"The sacrifice will be harder than now, for every hour I live I shall care more—care less for the man whom it is my duty to love beyond all others. The day after to-morrow I shall marry Jack Chamberlayne, or die. Oh! M. Danton, if I could only die! Standing before the altar, if death would come, and your hand clasp mine till the last! Life can never hold happiness for me equal to that."

And Leah speaks true; straight out from whatever soul she possesses. Honest poverty, work, hardship, sweetened by love—from the prospect of these she shudders, as she would sink beneath their weight in actuality. But that tragic, exquisite scene . . . the church, the parsons, the wealthy bridegroom . . . and the bride in her wreath and satins dying, in the arms of her true love, before them all! This melodramatic mixture of romance and reality of love, with all the accessories of millinery and glitter which are the very breath of her nostrils, touches her to the quick.

"I am speaking of life, not death, Leah; of that fate which you hold between your hands, not of vague possibilities. Marry Chamberlayne and you will die, not picturesquely before the altar, but hideously, slowly, in the after-time, of the corrupting disease of wealth and fashion. Die, not in the flesh—that is little—but in the soul, and by your own suicidal hand!"

"You are hard on me—and I am weak," she falters in reply. "I must go, now, and try to rest. Will you say one—only one forgiving word to me, first?"

She is white as the dress she wears. If ever the prophetic look of heartbreak was on human face, it is on Leah Pascal's at this moment. And, reader, judge her not by your code or by mine, but by her own. She has been reared in the belief that poverty is disgrace, and love as opposed to interest a kind of disease, to be dreaded, shunned, and, if by chance it should assail you, overcome. Duty, to her mind, lies at present on the side of Jack Chamberlayne and against Danton. After marriage—well, after marriage, one must look round the world and see how other women in her position regulate their sentiments. But now, the money, the position unsecured, to vacillate is crime. And all the time she loves this man, at whose side she stands, with a miserable intensity of love to which some far better, far cleverer women could, perhaps, not rise. No foot-rule, moral or mental, can help us much in our judgments upon others' weakness or their strength. Calculating, mercenary, self-absorbed Leah, at least, loves with the concentration of a narrow nature; will sell herself—aye, because she must; yet has not breadth of purpose sufficient to tear her heart from what she desires—and abandons!

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passion. You have not sunk so low in my opinion, Leah, that I would suspect you of that."

"Of what do you suspect me, my dear Bell?"

"Of caring for M. Danton too much for your own happiness Leah! That you have honestly tried to say the last words of the romance, I believe—the last words of the first volume of the romance," adds Bell, in spiteful parenthesis—"and that you found their taste bitter I know also. My dear child, do you think we have not all gone through the same thing? Why, before I married Mr. Baltimore——"

And then the hacknied little fiction about the primeval sin—the one first, pure, uncalculating attachment—follows. Does the jaded woman of fashion live in the great world, or the other world, who will not try to make you believe—yes, and herself, too—that she loved in her youth, and that true love, by cruelest circumstance rendered impossible, she has, of necessity, sunk to the thing she is?

"You see that your case is not exceptional" (this is the moral to Bell's fable). "Quite as much as you and M. Danton can possibly care for each other, *we* cared for each other. And now—now," says Bell, piously, "among all the mercies for which I have cause to be thankful, I esteem none greater than this—that I and my first love did not marry. Three or four years ago I came across him, married, eight children, a slatternly wife, and a dirty necktie. And that slatternly wife might have been me."

So much for Bell Baltimore's philosophy. Later in the day Colonel Pascal comes in to have a few parental words with the dear daughter he is so soon to lose. And to him Leah, for the first, probably for the last, time in her life speaks out some portion of her mind without reserve. She is going to be Jack's wife to-morrow. No doubt of that. Every fine dress, every wedding present packed away, is another proof of that. "Another nail in my coffin!" she says once—with such a ghost of a laugh—to Deb and Naomi. And yet—and yet—if a miraculous interposition were vouchsafed from Heaven—if Colonel Pascal's embroidered shirt-frills suddenly covered a beating, pitying human heart, the cup *might* pass from her! Give him the chance! As a drowning man clutches at a straw, Leah, in her extremity, feels that she will risk the desperate chance of her father's support. Let conscience, at least, in after days have this salve—that had he chosen to stretch one finger out to her aid, she might have been saved.

"You are looking pale, my love." They are opposite each other, beside the fire; Bell and the children, by Leah's order, having left them alone. "I trust you find Melanie efficient?"—Melanie is the new French abigail, who is to accompany the happy bride to Italy, the first legitimate maid Leah has possessed—otherwise, if there is anything Madame Bonchrétien can do, I am sure——"

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"Melanie is quite efficient, thank you. With the assistance of Bell, and Bell's maid, and Deb and Naomi, my enormous trousseau will, I have no doubt, be packed in time."

"And there is really nothing in which I can help you?" The Prince Charming is curiously fidgetty in manner; keeps on the side of the fire next the door, and most favourable for escape. "No letters to friends, or that sort of thing? Of course I shall see to the announcements in the English papers; Mrs. Baltimore undertakes to get a detailed account into the *Post;* and——"

"Father"—she rises abruptly, comes to his side, and looks down, straight, with her miserable, wistful eyes—"I wish to God I could get out of marrying Jack!"

Colonel Pascal gives a little jump, as though a hand had struck him. "Get out—of marrying—Jack?" he stammers, a full stop of breathlessness between each syllable.

"Get out of marrying Jack. I never pretended to care for him, as you know. And I was quite willing—oh, you need not speak, I wanted no coercion on your part!—quite willing to sell myself to the highest bidder. But now that it comes so near—father, I hate it worse than I expected; I think it right to tell you so."

Colonel Pascal by this time has recovered his presence of mind. "Your nerves are upset, Leah. All girls talk like this before their weddings. That you have no romantic attachment to poor Jack, I know; but the marriages that begin with romantic attachment do not, alas! end the best. When you have been Jack's wife three months——"

"Go on, sir."

"You—you will have grown accustomed——" begins Prince Charming, airily. But Leah interrupts him—oh, with what a gesture of profound contempt, for herself, for him!

"Have grown accustomed to my shame! That's the worst thought of all"—her head sinks upon her breast—"that one can grow accustomed, even to the degradation of such a marriage as this."

"I—I implore you not to speak so loud. If Bell—if one of the children should overhear!"

"If one of the children should overhear—well, in the time to come, it might be good that one of the children could say, 'On the night before her marriage, Leah shrank from herself. On the night before her marriage, if our father had wished it, Leah might have been saved.'"

Colonel Pascal takes out his delicate pocket-handkerchief, and wipes his forehead. "I don't expect reason from you, Leah. I know whose daughter you are——"

"You had better not speak of my mother," she interrupts, with quivering lips.

"But I do expect the common civility one member of society may

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look for from another. 'Saved!' I save you—with your wedding dinner spread, your wedding dresses packed! And all the time my conscience—my conscience," repeats Colonel Pascal, solemnly, "is almost smiting me for permitting you to make so absolute a love-match. You marry without a settlement. If it should please heaven to remove poor Jack before the expiration of his nonage, his Cousin Robarts will come into every shilling of the property. I must really confess, Leah, that I do not understand your language."

"That is just it! You don't understand my language. I hope I shall keep pretty straight as Mrs. John Chamberlayne, papa."

"I hope to God you will! Chamberlayne knows pretty well the sort of disposition you are, and seems disposed to run the risk."

"And, once married, a woman's actions are her husband's affair, are they not? It is only an unmarried daughter who can disgrace one. Papa, if to-morrow, at the very altar-steps, I was to lose courage—say the irrevocable 'No' instead of the irrevocable 'Yes'—should you look upon yourself as disgraced?"

Colonel Pascal's complexion turns to a ghastly shade of green—a hue such as no member of the outer world, I am sure, ever saw upon the sprightful, cheerful face of Prince Charming. "If you do not marry Jack Chamberlayne, I am ruined! I don't talk of disgrace—of the scandal such unheard of conduct must excite—I speak of money. Jack has become security for bills that I have no means whatever of meeting. Jack's money, as you insist upon the truth, is paying for your wedding clothes. Break with him, and not only I am ruined—Deb and Naomi, the children you pretend to love, are beggars with me."

It would be difficult, it is unnecessary to Leah's story, to eliminate the grain or two of relative truth that may be hidden under Colonel Pascal's words. Leah believes them. That is all with which we have concern. Leah believes them. And in doing so gives up her last chance of deliverance.

"You might have waited to fleece him, a few weeks, sir. You need not have sold me in advance."

This is all her answer. To Colonel Pascal's intense relief, a knock and message comes just at this moment at the door; and a quarter of an hour later he is showing his white teeth down in the drawing-room, receiving felicitations, taking out his pocket-handkerchief as he speaks of the dear little, half-tearful, half-happy daughter he has quitted upstairs.

Deb and Naomi beggars! Well, her father's visit, after all, has proved tonic. As she listens to the children's merry chatter, as she watches Deb's small figure, flying hither and thither, in wild excitement, after the two grand ladies' maids, Leah feels that her marriage—the sacrifice that is to stand between them and ruin—cannot be wholly evil. (Among all the unwitting sophistries of conscience, is

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anything more curious than our different little modes of self-extermination!) If these children are to be saved, it must be through her; and her only means of saving them is Jack Chamberlayne—or another.

The short autumn day dies into twilight. At last all the bridal dresses are packed; Bell has gone to her room to write letters; the ladies' maids have descended to their tea, and Deb and Naomi, left alone, begin to talk over the division of Leah's maiden wardrobe.

"I am to have the sprigged white muslin," says Deb. "It will make me two little evening frocks—Leah says so. And I am to have all the ribbons and flowers I can find, and the trimmings off the ball-dresses, to make dolls' clothes."

"I shall have the best velvet jacket," says Naomi. "It will not want taking in a bit; I have so much more figure than Leah! The black dress spotted with gold I mean to put away till I wear trains, and the old brown silk, you see, Deb, will cut up at once into a tidy polonaise."

Leah, at this, jumps up from her place beside the fire, and crosses over to the corner where the children are reviewing their spoils. Deb's small lap is filled to overflowing with odds and ends of finery. The old brown silk—the dress in which Danton first saw Leah Pascal—is in Naomi's hands.

"Naomi, my sister, you should not discuss the property of a moribund until he has lost his sense of hearing. It is not delicate. What is that you are saying about my brown silk?"

"Only—that it will make me a tidy polonaise," stammers Naomi. "Of course you are taking none of your old things with you. Melanie says brides never take away their old things."

"I am going to take my brown silk," says Leah, shortly. "But you need not shock Melanie's pride by telling her so. Never mind, Naomi," for Naomi, with her usual fine common sense, has placed herself in front of the dress with an air of battle. I will give you—well, that new cream-coloured tussore that you admired so much, instead."

"The lovely tussore, out of your trousseau, instead of the brown silk!" cries little Deb. "Why, it's as old as the hills, Leah, and quite unfashionably cut. I heard Mademoiselle Melanie say so."

"The colour . . . suits my complexion . . . Deb." Even the children are struck by the odd unsteadiness of her voice. "Bring a candle, one of you, and let us get it safely out of sight before the two fine ladies return."

And with her own trembling hands Leah Pascal puts the dress away—oh, that she could put away the memories connected with it as well!—jealousy hidden under the silks and satins and fripperies of the future Mrs. Chamberlayne.

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Injin Joe,

A HOMESPUN RHYME.

By

Sam[l]. Slick, Jun[r].

WHAT odds if in the settlement
  I'm only "Injin Joe"?
It can't be helped! A sorter voice
  Seems callin' me,* and so
I steal into the woods at night.
  Folks never see me go.

For many moons I trap for fur,
  Or hunt up Stoney Race.
The b'ars and wolves all sniff my track;
  The otter knows my face,
And thinks that slidin's risky fun,†
  If I'm too near the place.

The woods and I've growed friends. The trees
  Creep close up to the fire
When it burns bright, then steal away;
  You ought to see them, Squire!
They peep at me the whole night long,
  And never seem to tire.

* We've all of us got more of the Indian in our composition than we fancy. There is a wild strain in our breed that comes out when a youngster has been brought up near the woods, and has got a liking for the sniff of the spruces and hemlocks. I've known one or two such, when the hankering came over them, break loose and bolt for the woods for a spell. "Injin Joe" (as a backwood friend of mine was called, from his living so much in the woods) hunted with me on the Blue Ridge, a short distance from the spot where a month afterwards he got his scare.

† The otters are fond of having "a good time" for hours together, by sliding down a steep bank into the water; at least so Injin Joe tells me.

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They hush me off to sleep.* Their sound
  Is like the hum of bees,
A drowsy simmerin' of nights
  When there ain't any breeze,
Till from the lake the loon's† lone cry
  Wakes up the popple‡ trees.

What, lonesome? No! Well, once perhaps
  I did feel kinder so,
While huntin' on the Blue Ridge.
  The whole world seemed below;
I couldn't hear the Queelass Falls,
  Nor see the waters flow.

Lakes, mountains, rivers, rivers, lakes,
  No man could count them all;
I put the birch-bark§ to my lips,
  But somehow couldn't call.
I never thought the world so large;
  I never felt so small.

And far, far off, I thought I saw
  A long white thread. To me
It looked just like a streak of mist;
  I knew it was the sea.
There never seemed so many miles
  'Twixt humankind and me.

"Why, who's been here? I'm darned!" I saw
  A lying at my feet
A gun all honeycombed, all gone
  That rust and rot could eat.
"Some chap's gone under here, I guess,"
  My heart began to beat.

* This sound, which is very soothing, is, I suspect, produced by nocturnal insects, and not by the trees as Injin Joe supposes.

† "The Great Northern Diver." When Jim Rooney first heard its cry, he thought he was listening to a banshee.

‡ A species of aspen.

§ The horn with which the call of the doe (the "cow moose") is imitated by hunters.

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I turned—good Lord—he stared at me!
  It warn't a dream? The trees
Half hid a horrid skeleton
  A kneelin' on its knees.
It's hands were clasped; its eyes—
  I felt my blood begin to freeze.

A sudden, like a streak of light,
  It flashed on me, "I know
The old folks say a minister
  Was lost long, long ago.*
They thought the b'ars had finished him;
  I guess it wasn't so.

"He must have climbed up here to find
  The settlement. When he
Saw mountains, lakes, a world of woods,
  He jest caved in. The sea
He must have thought a streak of mist,
  As it had seemed to me.

"And so he must have gi'n it up,
  And knelt to say a prayer;
And starved, and prayed, and died." His eyes
  Had still a famished stare.
I turned and ran; their hungry look
  It gave me such a scare.

The very deer stood still, and seemed
  A sayin' as I ran,
"You hunted too! He's on your trail,
  That missionary man.
He's awful hungry lookin'. Jest
  You make tracks while you can."

I often laugh to think of it.
  Yes, stranger, I'd a scare;
Yet somehow still I seem to see
  That holler starving stare.
You'll hunt the Blue Ridge? Bet yer don't
  See Injin Joe up there.

* A Lutheran missionary.

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What odds if in the settlement
  I'm only "Injin Joe"?
It can't be helped! A sorter voice
  Seems callin' me, and so
I steal into the woods at night.
  Folks never see me go.

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Beaumarchais,

"THE FRENCH WILKES."

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'MIRABEAU,' ETC.

IT is questionable whether all the writings of Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau, struck blows so heavy against the pre-revolutionary society, or exercised so potent and immediate an influence upon the mind of France, as did the Goëzman Mémoires and 'Le Mariage de Figaro.' Certain it is that the annals of the eighteenth century contain no character or career more remarkable than that of Beaumarchais, nor any personage who produced a more marked effect upon the literature and the social and political life of his native country.

This extraordinary man, whose real name was Pierre Augustin Caron, was born in 1732. His father was a watchmaker of the Quartier Latin, and he was the only boy of six children. He was brought up to the paternal calling; for which in his early years he seems to have had but little taste, and to have much neglected for music, of which he was passionately fond. Of the education he received we have little means of judging; it could not have been very liberal; but he spared no labour in after years to make up for its deficiencies. At this period, however, when the almost Oriental lines of caste which had obtained under the Grand Monarque were being broken down by the freer manners of the Court of his successor, and class was gradually blending with class, not only by association, but by marriage, the Parisian *bourgeois* was making rapid strides both in education and refinement, and in these respects was equal, if not superior, to his descendants of a century later. Thus we find the elder Caron to have been a man of some cultivation. Two of the sisters were remarkable for taste, wit, and educated intelligence. One was a very fine musician; the other, Julie, who retired later in life into a convent, is not unknown in literature. Thus we find that the early youth of the future author of 'Figaro' was passed in an atmosphere and among associations more genial than his birth might lead us to suppose.

Young Pierre was decidedly precocious, and a sad scapegrace, and probably sat to himself thereafter for the portrait of Cherubino. At thirteen he was in love with a girl several years older than himself, and, when she laughed at him, meditated upon the desirability of suicide. Two or three years later his father expelled him from home on account of irregularities of conduct, taking care, however, first of all, that he

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should find a safe shelter beneath the roof of a near relation, whence the prodigal wrote very penitent letters, to which the father replied by an offer of reconciliation upon certain conditions, which reveal the nature of the offences. Among others were—that no orders were to be taken or executed in the business without his knowledge and authority—a condition which points to peculations; that he was to rise at six and work till supper-time—against which we may write, predisposition to idleness; that he was not to go out pleasuring, except on Sundays, and then only among his immediate relations and friends, and that he was always to be home by nine at the latest—upon which we comment, love of late hours and indefinite company; and that the only time he should give up to music was that between supper and bed-time. Rather rigorous conditions these, would think apprentices of the present day. Nevertheless, the culprit assented to all, and benefiting by the lesson he had received, applied himself so diligently to his trade, that at twenty he invented a new system of escapement, which proved to be a very valuable improvement in watchmaking. His discovery, published in a number of the 'Mercure,' 1753, was impudently appropriated by Lepante, watchmaker to the Luxembourg, who trusted for impunity to the obscurity of the inventor. But little did he know Pierre Caron, who at once commenced a lawsuit against him—the first of many, for his life was one long series of litigations, one of which extended fifty years beyond it. The Academy of Sciences, before which the question was brought, decided in his favour. This affair made some noise in Paris, and even attracted the attention of the Court. The King ordered one of the new watches, and Caron presented to Madame de Pompadour a tiny watch of exquisite make set in a ring; after this he was employed by all the courtiers, and took the name of the "King's Watchmaker."

"As soon as Beaumarchais appeared at Versailles," writes a contemporary, "the women were struck with his lofty stature, his slender, elegant figure, the regularity of his features, his bright, animated complexion, his confident bearing, that air of command which seemed to raise him above all who surrounded him, and finally with that involuntary ardour which he exhibited on their appearance."

One day a very handsome lady, about thirty, brought a watch to the shop to be repaired. A glance gave him his cue; he requested and obtained permission to be himself the bearer when it was finished. The lady was the wife of M. Francquet, a clerk of the royal kitchen, who was very old and infirm. She conceived a violent passion for the young watchmaker, and the husband seems to have made no objection to the close intimacy that ensued; indeed, so complaisant was he, that a few months afterwards he made over to him his office, in consideration of an annuity, and, to complete the obligation, died soon afterwards.

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Within eleven months of the demise of M. Francquet, young Caron espoused his widow and assumed the title of De Beaumarchais from a fief supposed to belong to her, a fief which it is probable existed only in his imagination. She survived her second nuptials scarcely a twelvemonth, and, having neglected to register the marriage contract, he lost all her property.

Those musical studies which his father had so rigorously restrained now stood him in good stead, and were the means of his first real advancement. Besides being a very fine performer upon the harp, an instrument then scarcely known in France, he had made some improvements in its construction. The excellence of his playing being reported to the King, he was sent for to perform in the presence of majesty. His success was so great that Louis' four maiden sisters desired to have "a taste of his quality," and in a short time he became their musical instructor; but not for hire, he soared too high for that. Such was the favour and familiarity he now enjoyed at Court, that on one occasion, every chair being occupied when he entered the music-room, so eager was the King to hear him play that he pushed his own seat towards him and insisted upon his taking it. He even won the good opinion of the not too sociable Dauphin, who paid him the high compliment of saying, "He is the only man who speaks the truth to me."

That such favours should slightly intoxicate a young *bourgeois*, and inflate him with exaggerated notions of his merit, is not at all surprising. Nature had created him something of a coxcomb, and such associations were not calculated to correct that tendency. These failings, and jealousy of his sudden rise, made him many enemies among the courtiers, who took frequent opportunities of mortifying and insulting him. One day a young noble requested him to examine his watch, which he asserted was out of order. "Since I have left off the business, I have become very unskilful in it," replied Beaumarchais coolly. "You will not refuse me this favour," persisted his tormentor. Beaumarchais took it, held it up as high as he could on pretence of examining it, and then let it fall. "I warned you, monsieur, of my unskilfulness," he said, with a low bow, and passed on.

Another adventure of a similar nature ended more tragically; a certain chevalier insulted him and forced him into a duel; they fought on horseback, without seconds, and Beaumarchais ran his adversary through the body; the wound, after eight days, proved fatal, but the dying man nobly refused to reveal the name of his opponent. "I have but my deserts," was his answer to the solicitations of his friends; "I challenged, to please people for whom I have no esteem, an honourable man who had given me no offence." The law against duelling was very severe, the punishment being death, and Beaumarchais, unaware of the chevalier's generous forbearance, was in great trepida-

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tion; he related the adventure to Mesdames the King's sisters, and threw himself upon their protection. They told it to Louis, who replied, "Take care that nothing is said to me upon the subject."

His influence with "Mesdames" enabled him to confer a favour upon a person whose gratitude laid the foundation of his future colossal fortune. Pâris du Verney, the celebrated financier, had just erected the École Militaire; but the building and its purposes having been designed by Pompadour, who since the beginning of the Seven Years' War had fallen into disfavour, was looked coldly upon by the royal family, and during nine years he had vainly entreated a royal inspection of his work, which languished for the want of such patronage; he was now a very old man, and this visit had become the most desired object of his life. It is a striking proof of the consideration in which Beaumarchais was held at the time when we find so rich and noted a man as Du Verney applying to him to bring about the accomplishment of his wishes. And he had not mistaken his man; in a short time the clever young courtier prevailed upon the King's sisters to visit the *école*, and soon afterwards the King himself followed their example. As a reward for this service Du Verney gave him a share in a speculation to the amount of 60,000 francs, and thus commenced a connexion which brought much wealth to Beaumarchais, and which was dissolved only by the death of his patron.

"The King of France," writes Montesquieu in his 'Lettres Persanes,' "has no mines of gold like his neighbour the King of Spain; but he has wealth, for he draws it from the vanity of his subjects, more inexhaustible than mines. He has undertaken or sustained great wars, having no other funds than titles of honour for sale; and by a prodigy of human pride, his troops were paid, his fortified places supplied, his fleets equipped."

The utter inadequacy of the national taxation, heavy as it was, to sustain the ruinous wars which his predecessor had entailed upon Louis the Fifteenth, as well as the licentious extravagance of his Court, obliged this monarch to resort to every expedient, however shameful, to replenish an exhausted treasury. None proved so profitable as the sale of offices and titles of nobility. When all existing ones were filled, others were invented for the accommodation of eager aspirants. Keen indeed would be the imagination of the burlesque writer that could invent titles more absurd than the realities of this period. "Cravat Tyer in ordinary to his Majesty" was one of the least ridiculous; imagine a suite of attendants composed of a captain, three valets and three guards, to attend upon the Greyhounds of the Chamber, and a special guardian of "the little dogs of the King's Chamber." This official received yearly 1446 francs, and 200 more for livery. To all these places, purchased for large sums, were attached large salaries; all were hereditary, with the option of sale; thus the money acquired by these

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infamous transactions entailed upon the nation an enormous debt, the interest of which very soon exceeded the principal. Titles of nobility were sold in the same shameless manner to any person rich enough to purchase them. It was this race of greedy *parvenus* and adventurers, rather than the true *noblesse* of France, whose oppressions at last goaded the people to the madness of the Terror; for there is no master so hard, no aristocrat so intolerant, no tyrant so absolute as the man who by luck, finesse, or the industry begot of dogged ambition, has wriggled himself above the class in which he was born.

In 1761, Beaumarchais purchased for 85,000 francs the office of Secretary to the King, by which he acquired a patent of nobility and the right of bearing the name of his imaginary fief. There was a quiet sarcasm in his retort upon those who thereafter reflected upon the meanness of his birth, "I can show you *the receipt* of my nobility." When he desired to purchase one of the Rangerships of the Woods and Rivers, of which there were eighteen in the kingdom, his admittance to their ranks was violently opposed by the existing Rangers on account of his plebeian origin. The letter he wrote them on his rejection shows how little right they had to put in such a plea, and forms an addenda to preceding remarks. Therein he tells the Grand Master of Orléans that he was the son of a hairdresser; the Grand Master of Burgundy that his father was a wool winder; the Grand Master of Châlons that he was the son of a Jew who hawked jewelry; the Grand Master of Paris that his father was a button maker. Let it be remarked that merit had nothing to do with these advancements —they were the mere result of money. The revolution certainly did good service in sweeping away this mock aristocracy, this burlesque nobility of a French *opera bouffe.*

Rejected by this noble fraternity, he expended his cash upon the office of Lieutenant-General of Preserves in the Bailliwick, and Captain of the Warren of the Louvre; it was more aristocratic but less lucrative.

We next find him, in 1764, paying a visit to Madrid, where his two married sisters had settled. Here, thanks to the favour of the French Ambassador, he was received at Court, and became the lion of the best society; planned numerous and vast speculations for the advancement of the agriculture, commerce, and manufactures of Spain; for the colonisation of Morena; for obtaining the sole right of supplying the colonies with negroes; for the establishment of a French company, on the model of the English East India, for the monopoly of trading with Louisiana, &c., &c., none of which proposals were ever executed. Here also, it may be supposed, he gathered some of the materials for his celebrated comedies, although Spanish critics are very severe upon his mistakes in their national names, manners, and character. Yet, while expressing almost contempt for the Spanish drama, to which, however, his comedies bear a striking resemblance,

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he brought back with him a great enthusiasm for the music, which, as we shall presently see, suggested the original draft of the celebrated 'Barbier.'

In 1767, he produced his first play, 'Eugénie.' He had been a versifier from boyhood, but this was the first literary production he gave to the public. It belonged to a school of drama that had its prototype in England in the sentimental comedy, from which it differed, however, in the entire exclusion of the comic element. It was this school which made the first revolt against the heroic tragedy, and was the beginning of the now universal domestic drama. Beaumarchais, however, was not its founder: that honour, if honour it be, belongs to Sedaine and Diderot; the 'Philosophe sans le Savoir' of the former, and the 'Fils Naturel' and 'Père de Famille' of the latter, being the models upon which he worked.

A feather will indicate the direction of the wind, and this poor, weak, ephemeral school of plays, that lived but a few years, indicates as precisely the direction the thought of France was taking, as did the Encylopédie or the summoning of the States-General. The woes of kings, queens, and heroes alone had hitherto been thought worthy the attention of the tragic muse; when the *bourgeois* and his family had appeared upon the stage it was only as a subject for ridicule, and even a *bourgeois* audience had no more sympathy with their troubles and sorrows than the school-boy of the present day has with an illtreated pantaloon. Love, ambition, self-sacrifice, all the nobler and heroic passions of our nature were considered to be the exclusive property of the great, and when found in the bosoms of inferior mortals became as ridiculous as the simulations of an ape. It was worthy of so radical a philosoper as Diderot to strike a blow at this privilege, and show that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin," and that the noblest as well as the vilest passions are the attributes of all humanity, and not of a section. Here was a great awakening, a marvellous lesson in equality, the full value of which was, perhaps, scarcely understood even by the teacher. It was a levelling of Olympus, a bringing down of the gods among men.

'Eugénie' all but failed on the first night. But the author set so vigorously to work to alter and revise it, and succeeded so well, that on its second representation it was a great success. Not, however, without being severely attacked by the critics. Grimm writes: "This work is M. de Beaumarchais' first attempt in literature and the drama. He is the holder of a small office at Court; he has hitherto played the part of a *pétit maître*, and has now taken a fancy, which is somewhat out of place, to play the author. I have not the honour of knowing him, but I am assured his self-sufficiency and conceit are remarkable. It would have been better to make good watches than to buy a place at Court, assume airs, and write bad pieces."

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"Baron" Grimm had about as much aristocratic blood in his veins as the man at whom he sneered. It is wondrous amusing to see these betitled plebeians betwitting one another with vulgar birth. This noble censor winds up his remarks by saying: "This man will never do anything even mediocre."

But, after all, 'Eugénie' is an indifferent play. It is partly founded upon a story in Le Sage's 'Diable Boiteux,' called 'Le Comte de Befflor.' The story, told many times since both by novelist and dramatist, is that of a young girl of humble origin betrayed by a noble villain by means of a false marriage. It has been translated into English under the title of 'The School for Rakes.'

Beaumarchais had as great an enthusiasm for the realistic as any real water, real hansom-cab dramatist of the present day. Between the acts he arranged a real-life pantomime. Servants came upon the stage, arranged chairs, opened trunks, stretched, yawned; some of the characters entered and searched about for bags and other articles. All this business was supposed to keep up the illusion of *reality*.

In the following year he produced his second play, 'Les Deux Amis.' In this work he put into practice a new theory of dramatic composition—"that the representation of social situations should be substituted for those of character." This play was much inferior to its predecessor, and was a decided failure; the plot is an unnatural one. 'The Two Friends' are a merchant and a tax-collector; the merchant having fallen into a temporary embarrassment, his friend puts in his hands all the money he has gathered in his public capacity, carefully concealing from him, however, the source of this succour. Unfortunately, the generous man is called upon to deliver up his trust sooner than he expects, and he suffers himself to be branded as a thief, even by the man he has assisted, rather than confess the truth. Of course all is ultimately arranged to everybody's satisfaction. Here we have quite the style of the English drama of twenty or thirty years ago. But we have as yet no indications of the writer of the 'Mémoires,' or the creator of 'Figaro.'

There were numerous sarcastic *mots* and epigrams upon this failure. The following is one of the best:—

> "J'ai vu de Beaumarchais le drame ridicule,
> Et je vais, en un mot, vous dire ce que c'est;
> C'est un Change où l'argent circule,
> Sans produire aucun interêt!"*

In 1768 he espoused a widow named Levêque, who brought him a

* "I have seen Beaumarchais' ridiculous drama, and I will tell you in a word what it is: it is a 'Change where money circulates without producing any *interest*."

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considerable fortune, with which he purchased from the State a large portion of the Forest of Chinon. He now left Paris for Touraine, settled himself in a small house, or rather hut, in the midst of his trees, and set about the cutting and sale of timber with as much zest as he had hitherto played the part of watchmaker, courtier, musician, speculator, and author. A strange fatality seemed to attend his matrimonial arrangements; in 1770 his second wife died, and with her half her fortune, which consisted of an annuity. Among other accusations brought against him in the Goëzman affair, of which I shall have to speak immediately, was that of poisoning both his wives. The charge was as absurd as it was malicious, considering the death of each entailed upon him a severe pecuniary loss.

During all this time his connection with Du Verney had been uninterrupted, and from the date of the King's visit to the "École Militaire" they had engaged together in several speculations of great magnitude. A little time previous to the old man's death, a balance sheet had been drawn up between the partners, in which the younger was acquitted of all claims, and marked as creditor to the amount of 15,000 francs. The Count de la Blache, Du Verney's nephew and heir, was Beaumarchais' bitter enemy; he hated him "as a lover loves his mistress," says La Harpe, "and had sworn to destroy, or at least to ruin him." Upon examining the accounts, he pronounced them to be a forgery, and instead of acknowledging the claim of 15,000 francs, brought the creditor in debt 139,000 livres. Too cautious, however, to prefer the charge of forgery, he instituted a civil action for the recovery of the supposed debt, which after many tedious delays was decided against the defendant, whose goods were at once seized in default of payment. About the same time he was involved in a serious quarrel with the Duc de Chaulnes, about an actress, which proceeded to personal violence upon both sides, and ended in the imprisonment of the Duc in Vincennes and his rival in the Fors l'Evêque.

But the list of his misfortunes is not yet complete. One of the judges who determined his cause was a councillor named Goëzman; suitors were in the habit of presenting this man's wife with sums of money to buy her husband's favour. Finding the suit going against him, in a moment of desperation and by the advice of a friend, Beaumarchais made a bargain with this vile woman, by which he handed her over 100 louis and a watch set with brilliants, upon this understanding, that if he won she was to keep all, if he lost she was to return the whole. But, in addition to these, she demanded 15 louis, for the purpose, she said, of bribing a secretary. The suit was lost, the Count probably bribing more heavily than his adversary, and the money was returned according to contract; but not the smaller sum, which he soon learned had gone into the pocket, not of a secretary, but of Madame Goëzman herself. He applied to her for restitution;

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she refused. Unsubdued by the misfortunes which would have crushed any other man to the dust, and daring every consequence, he instituted proceedings to recover this money. Goëzman, believing an adversary who had recently suffered so severe a defeat would be easily conquered, commenced a counter action for defamation of his wife's character, and an attempt to corrupt him through her agency. Convinced that he had nothing to hope from the law, Beaumarchais appealed to public opinion by publishing a series of 'Mémoires,' in which he defended his cause, held up his opponents to ridicule and execration, and exposed the corruption and badness of the laws with such wit, force, and eloquence, as to win not only the admiration, applause, and sympathy of Frenchmen of all degrees, but of all Europe. "Those singular writings," says La Harpe, "which were at the same time a pleading, a satire, a drama, a comedy, a portrait gallery—in fine, a kind of arena opened for the first time, where it seemed Beaumarchais amused himself by bringing in so many persons in a leash, like so many wild beasts, to divert the spectator; but all these personages so richly and diversely absurd or vile that one believes them selected expressly for him, and that he himself offers up thanks to Heaven that it has given him them for adversaries."

"What a man!" writes Voltaire of these same papers. "He unites everything—humour, seriousness, argument, gaiety, force, pathos, every kind of eloquence, and he seeks for none, and he confounds all his adversaries, and he gives lessons to his judges. His naïveté enchants me. I forgive him his impudence and his petulance."

Horace Walpole, writing to Madame du Deffand, says: "I have received the 'Beaumarchais Memorials.' I am at the third volume, and they amuse me very much. The man is very skilful; he reasons correctly, and has a great deal of wit; his pleasantry is sometimes very good, but he delights in it too much. In fine, I can understand, considering the party spirit at present among you, this affair causing a great sensation. I was forgetting to tell you with what horror your mode of administering justice struck me. Is there a country in the world in which this Madame Goëzman would not have been severely punished? Her deposition is shameless to a fearful extent. Are persons, then, allowed with you to lie, to prevaricate, to contradict themselves, to abuse their opponents in so desperate a manner?"

But there was a far deeper significance in these articles than mere literary wit and satire: they unveiled the secrets of the law, its corruptions, oppressions, injustices; they proclaimed and affirmed the inalienable rights of publicity in all legal proceedings;* they awoke men's minds from their apathetic slumber to a sense of the evils under

* Under the *ancien régime* all law proceedings were conducted with closed doors.

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which they groaned, and by exposing the infamy of that vile legislative body known in history as the "Maupeou Parlement," raised a clamour which subsided only with its downfall.*

Strange to say, Beaumarchais commanded the sympathy not only of the people, but of the great, and even of the Court, where portions of the 'Mémoires' were cast into a dramatic form and acted for the amusement of the King and Madame du Barry. Much as the judges would have desired to do so, they dared not acquit Goëzman and his wife in the teeth of this excitement; the first was dismissed from his office, and upon the second was pronounced the sentence of "*blâme*." The same punishment, which was tantamount to civic degradation and the loss of civic rights, was inflicted upon Beaumarchais. All Paris, of which he had become the momentary idol, flocked to his house to condole with him, and the Prince de Conti and the Duc de Chartres gave a brilliant fête in his honour.

Defeated in two great lawsuits, and just released from prison, degraded and outlawed, was not his spirit broken now? Not at all; a few hours after the sentence had been delivered he was gaily reading a new comedy he had written, entitled 'Le Barbier de Seville,' to a circle of admiring friends! The next day he commenced proceedings to procure a reversal of the judgment in both the La Blache and Goëzman suits! And the King, who was not ill-disposed towards him, immediately employed him upon a secret mission, for the successful accomplishment of which the "*blâme*" was to be annulled.

The eighteenth century was an age of libels. French adventurers, exiled for some crime or misdemeanour, would take up their abode in Holland or England, and write apocryphal memoirs—in which a few grains of truth were hidden among a bushel of slanders—of the rich and great among their countrymen and countrywomen; if the victims did not consent to pay heavily for the suppression of these slanders, which they did in nine cases out of ten, they were given to the world, and accepted by it as authentic histories. One of these wretches, de Morande by name, who had taken shelter in London, had written to the King to announce that unless a large sum of money was sent him, he should immediately publish a memoir of the Countess du Barry, in which he would hold her up to the execration of the world. There were too many infamies in the past life of that lady not to render such a threat extremely alarming. The King made a secret application to the British Government to give him up. This it dared not do openly, but it consented to close its eyes if a means could be devised to quietly

* There was a *mot* at the time—"Louis Quinze destroyed the old *parlement*; *quinze* louis will destroy the new." Maupeou having found the old *parlement* intractable, had by a *coup d'état* dispersed and imprisoned its members, and created another, composed of his own creatures, in its place. Goëzman was one of these.

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remove him. For this purpose a body of French police was sent to London; but Morande, receiving intelligence of his danger, cleverly eluded them, and published an inflammatory appeal to the British nation, in which he represented himself to be the innocent victim of a lawless tyrant. British patriotism took alarm at this infringement of its liberties, and the police narrowly escaped with their lives. As foul means had failed to silence the libeller, nothing remained but to try fair, and it was to accomplish this delicate task that Beaumarchais was employed.

He succeeded, but at a heavy cost. France had to pay 4000 francs down, and an annuity of 20,000 more, for the destruction of the Memoirs of Madame the King's mistress. Before he could receive the reward of his success, Louis the Fifteenth had gone to his account, and his successor was scarcely the person to gratefully appreciate such a service. But it was soon the new King's fate to have to employ him upon a mission exactly similar. A Jew named Angelucci threatened to publish certain slanderous memoirs of the Queen, unless it was made worth his while to suppress them. It is a very significant indication of the temper of the time that so infamous a threat, directed against one so pure as Marie Antoinette, could excite aught but contemptuous indifference in the mind of her husband. But the French seem to have imaginations "as foul as Vulcan's stithy," and are ever ready to give credence to the vilest libels even against the most virtuous.

In great alarm, Louis sends for Beaumarchais and consults him upon the difficulty. Our indefatigable adventurer at once starts for Holland, seeks out Angelucci, and buys the MSS. for the sum of 172,000 francs. The next day he receives intelligence that the Jew has started for Nuremberg, with another manuscript, which he had secreted. Not to be baffled, he instantly sets out in pursuit, travels night and day, until he overtakes the wretch in a wood, where he compels him to give up the papers. Scarcely is this done, when he is attacked by robbers, wounded and overcome; but just as they are about to despatch him, on rush his valet and another, quite *à la mélodrame*, and put the bandits to flight. Still doubtful whether Angelucci may not have other copies of his vile work, he hurries on to Vienna. After much difficulty he succeeds in obtaining admittance to the presence of the Empress. He tells her the whole story, and entreats her, for the safety of her daughter's fair fame, to order Angelucci's arrest. She promises to do so; but the next morning he himself is thrown into prison, and all his entreaties fail to elicit from his captors, or jailors, the nature of his offence. The truth is, the wildness and incoherence of his manner—for the excitement of the pursuit has worked him almost into a fever—have persuaded the Empress that the tale is false, and that the narrator is

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an impostor. This royal scepticism costs him a month's imprisonment; then all is cleared up, and a handsome present is offered as a compensation, which he courageously refuses, and returns at once to Paris.

Soon after this, popular indignation having brought the infamous Maupeou Parliament to an end, he procured the reversal of his sentence in the Goëzman affair. Some time afterwards, he was equally successful in his second suit against the Count de la Blache. Thus did his unconquerable energy procure him the victory in both these great litigations, which had at first gone so hopelessly against him.

But amidst all these turmoils, troubles, and adventures, he still found time for literature. In 1772, he had composed the first draft of the 'Barbier.' It was then a comic opera, destined for the Italian theatre, and was written simply as a vehicle to introduce some Spanish airs he had brought from Madrid. Being refused, however, by the Théâtre Italien, he turned it into a comedy, which was at once accepted by the Français. Three different times its production was fixed and postponed. The first was on account of the Duc de Chaulnes affair; the second on account of the Goëzman affair; the third time the censor stepped in and forbade its representation on account of its containing certain passages supposed to refer to the great lawsuits. At length, upon his return from Vienna, in 1775, he obtained a definite permission for its representation. Instead of cutting out the passages which had alarmed the censor, he added many other far more pungent and unmistakable references to the forbidden subject, and added a fifth act to the original four.

The fame of his lawsuits, adventures, and, above all, the brilliant wit of the 'Mémoires,' together with the frequent postponement of the work, had roused public curiosity to fever heat. But, as it is frequently the case after exaggerated expectations, the comedy was on the first night a dead failure.

"You should have seen," he writes wittily, in his Preface to the play, in which he calls it "a comedy that was represented and failed," "You should have seen the 'Barbier's' feeble supporters disperse, hide their faces, and take to flight. The women—always so brave when they have anything to protect—smothered in their hoods up to their plumes, and lowering their eyes in confusion; the men hastening to pay visits to one another, and to make honourable amends for what they had said in favour of my piece. . . . Some of them looked through their eye-glasses to the left as I passed by on the right, and pretended no longer to see me. Oh, Heavens! Others, with more courage, but making sure no one was looking at them, drew me into a corner, and said to me: 'How have you produced this illusion on our parts; for you must allow, my friend, that your piece is the greatest platitude in the world.'"

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Failure gave only new energy to this unconquerable man. Within twenty-four hours he revised, cut, and partly re-wrote the piece; on the second night its success was as triumphant as its failure had been dire upon the first; and it created a sensation which was only to be exceeded by its successor, 'Le Mariage de Figaro.'

There is a peculiar literary interest attached to the 'Barbier,' since out of a monetary disagreement with the *sociétaires* of the Théâtre Français arose the first Dramatic Authors' Society. In those days, and during the whole previous history of the drama in France, the actors had always taken the lion's share of the profits, leaving scarcely crumbs to the unfortunate authors. Hardy, one of the earliest and the most prolific of French playwrights, the Lope de Vega of France, is said never to have received more than three crowns for a play. The great Corneille was scarcely, if at all, better paid for his immortal productions; and had he not stooped to write fulsome dedications to the rich and powerful, would have died of hunger, as he nearly did once or twice. In 1653, Quinault slightly improved this state of things by establishing a new system of payment, namely, a ninth of the receipts for a five-act play, and a twelfth for a three-act; but this percentage was deducted only after the daily expenses of the theatre had been taken up, and these expenses were reckoned at 500 livres in the winter and 300 in the summer. To these sums was added the quarter, then, as now, deducted for the poor from all theatrical receipts, together with all subscriptions, life-tickets, and boxes secured before the night; and as if this did not sufficiently attenuate the poor author's share, the accounts of the theatre were confessedly falsified, or, as they put it, "badly made out." But even this does not complete the story of his wrongs. When the receipts of a performance fell below a certain sum, the play was said to "fall within the rules," that is to say, from that time it became the property of the theatre, and the writer had no further claim upon it. At first, the stipulated sums were those already mentioned, namely, 500 and 300 livres, but in 1750 they were raised respectively to 1200 and 800.

When, after thirty-two representations of his play to overflowing houses, Beaumarchais applied to the *sociétaires* for his share of the profits, they sent him 4506 livres. He requested to examine the accounts; they refused at first, then sent them "badly made out." These he would not accept, and they would render no others. It was not with him a question of money, for he had made the theatre a present of his former plays, and afterwards gave his whole share of the receipts of the 'Mariage de Figaro,' amounting to 41,499 livres, to charity; it was a question of principle, and amidst the enormous mass of business which litigation and vast speculations entailed upon him, he set himself to radically reform the existing condition of dramatic authorship.

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His preliminary step was to send out invitations to all the recognised playwrights to attend a dinner at his house, in order that they might discuss the best means to redress their mutual wrongs. The difficulty of the task he had undertaken was made manifest to him even here, upon the very threshold—it lay less in the opposition of the actors than in the authors themselves. Some were too old, or too well off, or too indolent, to bestir themselves to join in the movement; others were won over to the enemy by the blandishments of the actresses; one refused to come if another, of whom he was jealous or with whom he had a personal quarrel, was invited; some of the smaller fry, in whom vanity was stronger than interest, feared to rebel against the actors, lest their productions should henceforth be tabooed. A certain number, however, of the more sensible heartily supported Beaumarchais in his excellent undertaking.

During three years the battle raged warmly upon both sides. The 'Français' was an enormously powerful opponent, backed as it was by some of the greatest of the *noblesse*, and no man less influential than Beaumarchais could have sustained the fight against it. As it was, he was virtually defeated, for at the end of the time specified the King issued a new decree, which, although it altered the terms of payment, left the author, in reality, in no better position than before. At an early stage of the Revolution the privileges of the 'Français' were suppressed; and in 1791, influenced by several Mémoires published by Beaumarchais, the National Assembly decreed that the plays of no living author should be represented, either in Paris or the provinces, without his permission.

To pass from the disagreements of authors and actors to the revolt of the American colonies seems a violent transition, but the whole life of this man was marked by such extraordinary incongruities. There is little or no doubt but that Beaumarchais' unceasing and urgent representations to the ministers of Louis the Sixteenth largely influenced that monarch's fatal policy of intervention in American affairs. It is certain that, after much urging, he prevailed upon Maurepas to permit him to secretly freight ships for the colonies, at his own risk, with arms, ammunition, and clothing for 25,000 men. The vastness of the undertaking may be conceived from the fact that the first cargo was worth 3,000,000 francs, and that if one out of three ships arrived safely the profits would still be large. Several of the vessels were seized by the English cruisers, but many others reached their destination and delivered their cargo. When the war was concluded, the States were indebted to him for a large sum. There is not space to enter into the complicated discussion that ensued; there was a dispute over a million francs, but that this formed a just portion of his demands is beyond a doubt. Another lawsuit—this one to last long beyond his life! In 1793, Alexander Hamilton decided that the

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United States was Beaumarchais' debtor to the amount of 2,280,000 francs. But still the grateful Republic declined to pay the man who had so largely assisted in its establishment. From his garret in Hamburg, during the Terror, he addressed an appeal to the whole nation. "Americans!" it began, "I have served you with unwearied zeal. I have received during my life nothing but bitterness for my recompense, and I die your creditor. Suffer me, then, in dying, to bequeath you my daughter, to endow her with a portion of what you owe me," &c. But even this appeal produced no effect upon that shrewd and tender-hearted people. Nearly fifty years afterwards they paid one of his descendants 800,000 francs, although the debt allowed by Hamilton, with interest, then amounted to 4,000,000. The ingratitude of princes has justly passed into a proverb, but a careful examination of history would not give a large balance of that rare virtue to republicans.

Surely now he has enough to absorb his exuberant energy, to stretch his business capacity to the utmost. Not so. In the midst of these vast undertakings he rushes into another, which alone would suffice to monopolise every moment and every thought of any ordinary mortal. This is no less than two complete editions of Voltaire's works, in 162 volumes, to be edited by Condorcet. He buys all that author's unpublished MSS. of 'Panckouke' for 160,000 francs; sends to England for Baskerville's type, then the best in the world; despatches agents to Holland to study the art of paper-making; buys three paper mills in the Vosges; and then looks about for a place where the work may be printed—this last the most difficult task of all. French territory is out of the question, as a large portion of the great sceptic's writings is there under ban. At length he fixes upon Kehl, in the domains of the Margrave of Baden. That potentate makes difficulties at first, and this arrangement nearly falls through, but is at length brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Three years are occupied in organising the enterprise, and the work will require eleven years to be executed!

It proved a vast failure. Fifteen thousand copies were printed, and the subscribers never numbered two thousand.

We must pass over the Kornman episode* (another lawsuit!), and

* The wife of a man named Kornman having been greatly ill-treated and afterwards imprisoned by her husband, appealed for protection. Beaumarchais took up her cause; for which Kornman commenced a *procès* against him. The affair is chiefly remarkable for a series of 'Mémoires' from the pen of a young advocate named Bergasse, who proved himself more than a match for Beaumarchais himself. This man afterwards figured as Bégearss, a very despicable character, in 'La Mère Coupable.' During the suit, and after, the fickle Parisians transferred their sympathies from their whilom favourite to his opponent. Beaumarchais won the *procès*, but lost his popularity—at least for a time.

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come at once to that most important and brilliant event, which is in itself an extraordinary history—the production of his famous comedy, 'Le Mariage de Figaro,' which he had found time to write amidst all these gigantic and multifarious speculations. Long before it was ready for representation, the author, as in the case of the 'Barbier,' had artfully contrived to raise expectation on tiptoe. The King requested to peruse it. It was read to him and the Queen by Madame Campan. "It is detestable!" he exclaimed, when she came to Figaro's tirade against State prisons. "This shall never be played: we should have to pull down the Bastille to prevent this piece being dangerous. This man trifles with all that must be respected in a government." "Then it will not be played?" inquired the Queen. "Certainly not; you may be assured of that," was the reply.*

But Beaumarchais' influence among the most powerful of the nobility at this time was more than sufficient to overcome the opposition of the weak and vacillating Louis. Our author was immensely rich, and more than one great aristocrat—the Prince of Nassau, for instance—was his debtor for large sums. The comedy was submitted to the judgment of no fewer than five censors, all of whom he found means to convert into advocates. At length the Comte de Vaudreuil begged and obtained permission for its representation at his country house on the occasion of a fête given in honour of the Comte d'Artois. But before the author would accede to this, he adroitly assured himself that the royal veto should be withdrawn from its production at the 'Français.'

As with the 'Barbier,' expectation was disappointed; the 'Mariage' was not a success, and had to undergo considerable alterations. Doubtless it was this partial failure which ultimately determined the King to authorise its public representation. He told Montesquieu that he believed it would fail. Never did judgment prove more erroneous. At eight o'clock in the morning, on the day of its first performance, the doors of the theatre were besieged by an eager crowd. "It is impossible," writes Grimm, "to be by turns more humble, more bold, more urgent to obtain a favour at Court than were our young men of rank to secure a place on the first representation of 'Figaro.'" Three persons were suffocated in the press. Ladies of the highest rank dined in the actress's rooms to be sure of a place, and were content with a seat even in the balconies, among women not *comme il faut*.

Beaumarchais sat in a private box screened by a lattice work, between two abbés, in order, he said, that they might administer "*des secours très spirituels*" to him in case of death. The triumph was prodigious. The comedy ran eight months, at the end of which the receipts amounted to 346,197 livres. As before stated, he gave the whole of his share, 41,499 livres, to charities.

* Madame Campan's 'Memoirs.'

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"There is something more foolish than my piece," he said, "and that is its success." "The *ancien régime*," writes St. Beuve, "would not have so merited to perish if it had not assisted that evening, and a hundred times afterwards, with transport, at that gay, mad, insolent, indecent mockery of itself, and if it had not taken so magnificent a part in its own destruction." It is undoubtedly a scarcely exaggerated picture of the morals and manners of the society of the day. It is full of the most bitter satire against the author's enemies, and Figaro's speeches contain a running commentary upon the most famous incidents of the author's life. The effrontery with which he exposed the vices, the meanness, the ignorance of the very people with whom he associated, his ridicule of ministers, police, censors, prisons, every department of law and government, is unique in modern literature. And it is still more remarkable when we consider that in this gibbeting of society the author, unlike his predecessors in that school of satire, did not aim at its overthrow. Why should he, when his own interests were so completely identified with it? Yet Napoleon said that "'Figaro' was the revolution already in action."

Little thought the brilliant *noblesse*, who nightly assembled to enjoy the witty sarcasms of the Spanish valet, that they were applauding their own trial and condemnation; that beneath that smiling, mocking mask were hidden the grim features of the headsman, and that behind him hovered the shadow of the guillotine. So might the gay Pompeians have revelled the night before Vesuvius overwhelmed them with its fiery torrent.

But the history of the comedy is not yet complete. The King was greatly irritated at its success. One evening, shortly after its production, while he was playing cards, his brother introduced the subject; giving way to anger, he wrote in pencil upon the back of a seven of spades an order for Beaumarchais' arrest. It was immediately executed, and the prisoner was thrown into Saint Lazare, one of the vilest prisons of the city. The consternation of Paris may be imagined; consternation speedily turned to indignation at such an act of lawless tyranny. Of all the fatal blunders of Louis the Sixteenth's reign, few were more appalling than this. At the end of five days Beaumarchais was released, and to make him amends for his unjust arrest the King not only went in person, attended by all his ministers, to witness the comedy, but actually had it played at the 'Trianon,' the Queen herself taking the part of Rosine! It is difficult to sympathise with the woes of a monarch who could thus act; for weakness is the worst and most dangerous of all kingly vices.

A strange, extravagant drama, entitled 'Tarare,' and a third comedy entitled 'La Mère Coupable,' in which the immortal Figaro is a third time introduced, now reformed and virtuous, complete the list of his dramatic works. Of these the 'Mariage' is incomparably the most

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brilliant, and still holds the French stage. In *verve, abandon*, and originality of conception, it is unrivalled. "Every moment," writes Grimm, "the action seems approaching its end; every moment the author sets it going again, and by words almost insignificant, but which, without effort, prepare new scenes and replace all the actors in a situation as vivid, as *piquant* as those that went before."

At the outbreak of the Revolution he went over to the popular side, and we find him contracting with the Assembly to supply 60,000 muskets, which he was to bring from Holland. This proved a task of insurmountable difficulty. At one time he was arrested, thrown into the Abbaye, and, but for a friend who enabled him to escape only two hours before they commenced, would have been one of the victims of the September massacres. Instead of concealing himself in some place of safety, as any other man would have done, he proceeded from the prison gates to seek out Danton upon the musket affair, in pursuance of which project he soon afterwards left France. During his absence the Convention proscribed him, placed him upon the list of *emigrés*, took possession of his magnificent house—one of the sights of Paris, and which had cost him, in 1780, 1,663,000 francs—and confiscated all his effects. Age had not diminished his old daring hardihood; utterly regardless of the danger that menaced him, he returned to Paris in 1793 to defend his rights, and wrote another series of 'Mémoires,' of which he had 6000 copies printed and distributed throughout the city. "I have come," he wrote to the terrible Santerre, "to offer my head to the sword of Justice, if I cannot prove I am a great citizen. Save me, Citizen Commandant, from pillage and the dagger, and I shall again be serviceable to my country."

During the Terror he took refuge in Holland, whence we have already described him as writing from his miserable garret urgent appeals to the justice of America. He returned to Paris in 1796 to gather together the remnants of his once splendid fortune. His life was restless and feverish to the last. On the 18th of May, 1799, he was found dead in his bed.

An analysis of Beaumarchais' character would not prove at all interesting to the general reader; but so much was he vilified and abused by many of his contemporaries, that I cannot forbear quoting the testimony of La Harpe, who, as he himself informs us, was by no means a partial critic.

"M. Beaumarchais, the man, was, to me, always superior to the writer, and worthy of particular attention. I can speak freely upon all that concerns him without being suspected of partiality, since, although I have lived in his society sufficiently to know him well, I have never been bound to him by any ties of friendship. He has never done me good or evil, and I owe to his memory only what I owe to the public—truth. . . . Surrounded by a family whom he loved, and

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friends who loved him as much as his family, far from the intercourse of women, which is the centre of all rivalries and dissensions, he tasted the joy and peace of domesticity almost always in the society of the same people; and in this circle, where he sought repose, this Beaumarchais, so turbulent in the world, was no more, in the true meaning of the term, than a good man. I have never seen any one who appeared to be on better terms with others and with himself." Commenting upon Voltaire's *mot* (referring to the charge of poisoning his wives), "This man is too droll to be a poisoner," he continues. "He is too good, too sensible, too open, too bountiful, to do a wicked action."

To literary men and all persons in distress his purse was always open. At his death there were found among his papers memoranda of 900,000 francs lent without security, at different times, to men of all classes, and seemingly never repaid.

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An April Day in St. James's Street.

When Whittington rested on Highgate Hill, leaning against the stone pillar which supported the lamp in front of the chapel and leper-house of St. Anthony—"Whittington's stone" marks the precise spot where stood the pillar and the lamp—he looked back upon that London where he was destined to achieve a metropolitan greatness. Had he looked from the brow of the hill, across the open country, towards Westminster, he might have seen, near the lowest level of the ground, the roof and the gardens of another house for lepers, a house whose chapel was dedicated to St. James, and whose inmates were not repulsive enough to frighten away any noble gentleman whose especial interest it was to lie hid for a while, for dear life's sake.

This house, with its grounds on the ascent now occupied by St. James's Street, was destined to undergo as beneficial a change as young Whittington himself. When Henry the Eighth became proprietor of so wide an extent of church property, he converted the house for lepers into a house for kings. The commodious red brick palace wore about it a fine air of ease, and warmth, and comfort. The old entrance gate, a relic of the original building, grim and dingy, sheds a gloom over the street stretching up and away from it. But it was once as gay, and glittering, and brightly red as the stoutest of the yeomen of the Guard; and when the king's banner first flung out its folds from the summit, fashion flocked round the standard, and the locality became at once a rallying place for the "men of mode."

Since that period, well nigh a dozen generations of people of "quality," as Chesterfield's classification has it, have passed over, and dropped from, the stage which reaches from Piccadilly to the Palace. Statesmen and dupes, philosophers and intriguers, fine gentlemen and finer ladies, soldiers and wits, and well-dressed dunces, highwaymen who risked their lives in robbing a foe, gamblers who risked nothing when plundering their friends, true men and impostors—with what numberless groups the ground is encumbered!—some fighting fiercely the battle of life, some looking on with indifference, while others stride over the fallen, and gaily and pleasantly attain their object without sharing in the struggle.

Choose the sunshiny portion of any of the April days, and study that old palace of St. James and the ground round about it. The hospital for lepers which stood there was founded so early that no man

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can tell the date thereof. Originally, some good London citizens built and endowed it for fourteen maiden ladies, leprous sisters, "living chastely and honestly in divine service," as Strype chronicles it; and the chronicling reminds one of the verse in the ballad of the 'Leprous Lady and the Clerk:'

> "'I pray you, let me be in peace.
> Get hence! make room for me to die!'
> She said that. Her proud lips would cease,
> Put up to mine, and turn to cry."

Subsequently, other charitable Londoners added to the fund money and land, and furnished means for eight brethren to administer divine service, in much about the spot where the Chapel Royal is. When you look at that high-faluting congregation, at the devotion of which the angels must feel honoured, think of the leprous sisters who came to worship on that site; and, centuries later, the saucy maids of honour who were wont to ogle the young officers from behind their fans, till the not-too-easily-shocked authorities set up high-backed pews to stop the spreading of such soft intercourse between the young people aforesaid.

After the religious establishment fell to Henry the Eighth, who built a palace on the site, the look-out northward was over open country. It soon became fashionable ground. There are two persons who speak of the once famous terraces that distinguished the street which sprung up in front of, and took its name from, the palace. Strype, who lived from the reign of Charles the First to that of George the Second (1643-1737) says: "St. James's Street beginneth at the Palace of St. James's, and runs up to the road against Albemarle Buildings, being a spacious street with very good houses well inhabited by gentry; at the upper end of which, towards the road, are the best, having before them a terrace walk, ascended by steps, with a freestone pavement." The other writer is Pope, who, in a letter to Mr. Pearce, says: "It happening that I am in town, if you go in a coach, I would have your company so much the longer if you call at my lodgings at Mr. Digby's, next door to the 'Golden Ball,' on the second terrees in St. James's Street."

As you take your April walk through this street, you may people it with celebrities. In it once dwelt Edmund Waller, for above a quarter of the seventeenth century, and a poet of a far higher quality, namely, Pope. Gibbon lived also in this street, and you may fancy him crossing from his lodgings at the corner of Little St. James's Street, where he died, to Boodle's—that club for country gentlemen which acquired the title of 'The Top-Boot and Worsted Stocking Club.' As great a poet and writer as any of them, Lord Byron, lived on the east side for a time; and in his days highwaymen had

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not ceased to exist; for once, as he got into his carriage (at the door of his Chambers, now No. 7) to go to Sydenham to visit another poet, Campbell, his most impressive inquiry to his servant was, "Are you sure you have put the pistols inside?"

Pistol work there had been in the street itself long before; for, while Waller was residing in it, Colonel Blood made his famous, or infamous, attack on the Duke of Ormond, and, dragging him out of his coach, carried him up to Tyburn, where the Duke was within a hair's breadth of being strung up to the permanently erected triangular gibbet. Just sixty years ago, a popular artist flung himself out of a second-floor window, and when he was picked up, the body was found to be that of a man who had kept his contemporaries alive with laughter for many a day, namely, Gilray the caricaturist.

I see two visions of handsome highwaymen taking their chocolate in the "gardens" kept by White at the bottom of the street, before "White's" became known at the top as the most exclusive of clubs. It was not so, indeed, at first, since Colly Cibber, an actor, was elected member. The highwaymen used to ride away to their vocation unmolested, and nobody knew which to admire most, the horse or his rider. With the clubs sprang up deep play and smart wit, to record which would fill many numbers of our much-esteemed TEMPLE BAR. But I have visions of two fair women, bearing the same name, who were once the cynosure of all eyes in this street, and of whom I now propose to say a word or two. We must go some way back to do it.

Here, then, is an April morning in 1735. It is near noon, and all the fine gentlemen are thus early abroad; and they may be glad to be so, for seldom have they seen so graceful a vision as that which now passes before them. An open chariot is descending the street towards the palace; reclining in it, thoughtfully, and all unheeding the homage offered her by beaux in hatless wigs, is a lady whose beauty of expression, even when her features are thus in repose, and whose inexpressibly soft blue eyes had touched a more manly heart than any then beating behind the embroidered waistcoats of the Sir Foplings and Sir Courtlys on the footpaths. And yet this lady is but the daughter of a poor portrait painter in Golden Square, a sad artist, for he has become nearly sightless; a happy father, however, for whom his daughter undertook to toil, and by her love lighten his misfortune.

She does not just now look much the happier for having secured happiness for others; but she is perplexed, and has indeed lived a perplexed life, from the moment that, overcoming her natural reluctance to appear before the public, she turned her good gifts to account, and for ten years (1714–1724) was the delight of the musical world and the idol of her parents. The accomplished young contralto was idolized by others as well as by her happy father and mother; but

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the worship here paid was of a different quality. Anastasia Robinson was the 'Cynthia' to whom a thousand admirers wrote sonnets, or said they wrote them, or who ardently wished that they *could* write them. For that species of worship, however, the young Anastasia cared not to keep an altar. She was courteous to the poets, but laughed at the poetasters. She was as maidenly and as home-keeping a maiden as Desdemona herself, and as to *her*, so even in her father's house, there came the Othello whom she could not resist, and might not refuse. Such a soldier as Lord Peterborough would, perhaps, have been unsuccessful; but to a gentleman so gallant, so insinuating, so persuasive, so refined, one so ready, on this particular occasion, to atune his mind and manner to those of the tuneful Anastasia, that, reserved and guarded as she had been—poor portrait-painter's daughter wooed by an earl, of whom the world had heard in various ways, she could not but whisper "yes," when "my lord" offered himself as her husband, but stipulated, for family reasons, that the marriage should for a time be kept private.

That privacy, the effect more of the bridegroom's pride than of any family pressure which could at all embarrass him, was the source of all her perplexity. She disappeared from the stage of the opera, and was never heard of but at her own home, where she kept house with her mother after her father's death. The earl was mean enough to be half-ashamed of the lady whom he was proud of adoring, and whom he well knew to be worthy of all his adoration. He was not hero enough to be as morally brave as he was personally courageous. The lustre of his wife's virtues enchanted him, but he was afraid to acknowledge that they were the virtues of his wife. He declared she was worthy of being a queen, and he shivered at the idea of confessing that she was a countess. He could conquer a strong city, but he could not overcome his own selfish weakness, and Anastasia remained "Mistress Robinson" as before. On one occasion, this great warrior and weak man was stricken with grievous sickness, and he implored Anastasia to come to him and enable him to bear his cruel suffering by her presence and her succour. In his anguish he implored the aid of his wife, but he forbade her going to his house at Mount Bevis in that character; all that the obstinate earl would consent to, without which Anastasia refused to make a step in advance to become his nurse, was that she might, while staying at Mount Bevis with her mother, wear a wedding-ring. Magnificent concession! In her husband's mansion she was permitted to wear the insignia of somebody else's wife!

The Earl recovered, and was more in love with his wife and nurse than ever; but was not a jot less ashamed than before of enjoying the privilege of acknowledging such affection by giving it honorable publicity. In this way, year after year wore away; and now my lord

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is about to proceed to Lisbon, and he has appointed St. James's Palace as a trysting-place, where he and Anastasia are to bid adieu to each other.

He might have seen her descending St. James's Street, for he was looking through the windows of the apartment of his niece, Mrs. Poyntz, over the gateway. The apartment was full of groups of people, who were whispering to each other, while the Earl was gazing up the street. They were all his kinsfolk, whose presence there was owing to special invitation; and when Anastasia appeared at the open door, and the haughty and hot-tempered and obstinate Earl went humbly and affectionately and voluntarily to meet and to greet her, the scene might be painted by a sympathising artist, but it could never have been adequately described in words by Lord Hervey, Mrs. Delaney, or any other gossiping old lady skilled in word-painting.

It is certain that no stage ever exhibited so dramatic and so satisfactory a situation. The relations are in a semicircle, brim-full of curiosity, and, with the exception, perhaps, of an elderly rake, who mutters something like "actress," and the rejoinder of the bold, painted woman to whom the murmur is addressed, of the word "Papist," there is a general appearance of kindly feeling, if not of welcome, towards the shrinking, suspecting, hoping, wondering, happy, fainting woman whom the Earl takes tenderly by the hand, and leads to the open side of the circle.

There, standing beneath that palace roof, offender as he had been, he made such ample amends for offences, that even the kinsfolk who might have been hurt by his confession could not but honour him in their hearts. Still tenderly holding his wife by the hand, and looking on her with softened pride, he presented her with pride more formal and stately to his family as the Countess of Peterborough. Nor did he spare himself while he exalted her. He dwelt lovingly on her virtues, the hard duty she had particularly fulfilled towards himself, her accomplishments, her trials, the charms by which she had won him, and the qualities which had so touched his older and more worldly heart, and had compelled him to render the tardy but due justice of acknowledging her as his dear and honoured wife. In the very midst of the panegyric and confession, the Countess fairly fainted away altogether. The Earl busied himself about her like a young lover; and the ladies, putting aside the fine gentlemen who manifested their sympathy by depriving her of air, opened their pungent *flacons*, and worked their brilliant fans—"brought her to herself," and finished their tender work by greeting the conscious Countess with the homage of smiles and the tribute of kisses.

Does not this scene almost sanctify that ancient apartment over the gateway? Was there ever royal marriage celebrated within the chapel so touching in its attending sentiment as this reconciliation and

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true wedding in the room of Mr. Poyntz, the old tutor of Prince William? The bridegroom did not very long survive this scene; but that fact abates nothing of the grandeur and propriety of the scene itself. I confess that I never descend St. James's Street without looking up above the gateway. To me, the dulled windows seem brightened by the sunny glory of a good deed. Through them, I fancy the room within re-peopled. The feathers, the brocaded gowns, the velvet coats, the swords—all are there; and there is a general rustling as two persons pass near the bright little panes of glass and look so unmistakably happy. One of them, calmly radiant as the most beautiful of her own saints, is especially visible, and as she turns for a moment towards the light, which is increased by her beauty of expression, I respectfully touch my hat to Anastasia Robinson—I beg her pardon!—I mean to Lady Peterborough.

And as I turn away, the vision of another lady named Robinson comes upon me. She was a more beautiful creature than Anastasia, but was never half so happy, though for a time her career was more brilliant, one might almost say, more gorgeous. I now allude to the once famous Perdita Robinson, whose chariot, with that Queen of Beauty in it, used to be looked for by crowds of cockneys, and to be saluted by fops, to show, or to pretend they knew her, as it passed up St. James's Street to Hyde Park or descended it from Bond Street to Pall Mall. This idol of the hour, or rather Cynthia of the minute, like Anastasia, flashed and dazzled on the stage, before she became the subject of public talk. They were not contemporaries. Anastasia Robinson sang in the old Concert Room in York Buildings, Strand, in the reign of Queen Anne. She first appeared at the Opera House, in 1714, as Echo, in the 'Narcissus' of Scarlatti; and the fact that her success brought her an engagement of £1000 a-year, is a proof of the stuff of which the young contralto was made, and how she was appreciated. In every successive new opera she had a part, and capped them all by her triumph in Handel's 'Amadigi' (Amadis of Gaul). Anastasia not only stirred her audiences to enthusiasm, but some of her comrades to very ardent love; and this took such tumultuous expression (in 1724) at a public rehearsal of an opera, on the part of Senesino, the favourite male singer of the day, that the Earl of Peterborough (who was then Anastasia's husband, but ashamed to own the happiness and honour), fell upon the impudent Italian behind the scenes, and caned him till he roared with anguish and cried for pardon. At the close of the above season Anastasia withdrew from the stage, but she was to be seen in Lord Peterborough's berlin in St. James's Street, the very high road of fashion at that time. A kind-hearted people put the very worst construction on what they saw, to which they were helped by the cruel eccentricity of the husband. When she died his honoured widow in 1750, her singular lord had been dead fifteen years.

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At the last-mentioned date, Perdita Robinson was not born. That did not occur till eight years after the Countess of Peterborough was in the grave. Anastasia was born a Robinson, and christened Anastasia. The other lady gained the surname by marriage, and the name of Perdita because, while playing that character, she enamoured the inflammable Prince of Wales, who then called himself Florizel. But her maiden name was Darby; though, indeed, that was a name which her father had assumed. He was an Irishman, who, finding his family name of Macdermott too Irish, was not too squeamish to adopt that of Darby, as more English and elegant. This absurd sort of thing had been done before, and has been done since, by unworthy Irishmen. Lady Morgan's father, for instance, known to the stage and to us as Mr. Owenson, was in reality a Mr. Mackeon, or McOwen, and he was silly enough to adopt the English form. I have often wondered that, before my lady was my lady, she did not resume her rightful appellation, and publish 'The Wild Irish Girl,' by Miss McOwen, instead of letting it be attributed to Miss Owenson. Mr. Darby's pride took a very singular way of showing itself; for when he had ruined his family, and his wife opened a school to support her children, the once-called Macdermott shut it up as a disgrace to the (not excessively aristocratic) name of Darby. Miss Robinson got rid of the name with all possible alacrity. She was not yet sweet sixteen when she married a plausible scamp who passed himself off as heir to a large estate, whereas he was only the natural son of the rightful owner. This scamp's beautiful wife was really a good wife to him, as long as he would let her; but extravagance of living brought down ruin upon both, and no end of lovers about the lady. To save herself from the former, she took to the stage, appearing at Drury Lane, in the season of 1776–77, as Juliet. Half the town fell into ecstasies about her beauty, but her dramatic career came to a close in a dozen seasons. In that of 1779–80, Mrs. Robinson played that part of Perdita, which, so to speak, flung her into the arms of Florizel. For a year, and not till after a pretty drama of coyness on one side and passion on the other was played, these two people lived in a fool's paradise; and then came the reverse of paradise. The Prince was weary of his plaything, and the beautiful doll was cared for by less noble amateurs. For a time, however, she was Queen of Beauty still, and Queen of Fashion. St. James's Street was part of her especial public ground. Miss Hawkins has described, and Mr. Fitzgerald has quoted, the tart maiden lady's description of this exquisite creature. Miss Hawkins says that Perdita was "unquestionably very beautiful," but the phrase implies a certain reluctance in the admission, especially as the lady eagerly adds that the beauty was more in the face than in the figure; which facial beauty is the lowest of all types of beauty; that of figure is a thousand times

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superior, and charm of expression the most beautiful thing of all. I have seen a woman, as plain as woman could be, perfectly lovable by her sweet expression and her irresistible style. A merely beautiful speaking doll is a toy that a man should never take up with. He will repent it as long as he lives. Such a doll is invariably vicious—as full of malice as of folly."

Miss Hawkins alludes to the one quality of Mrs. Robinson—the facility with which she adapted her deportment to her dress. "When she was to be seen daily in St. James's Street or Pall Mall, even in her chariot, the variation was striking. To-day she was a *paysanne*, with her straw hat tied to the back of her head, looking as if too new to what she passed to know what she looked at," whatever that may mean. We understand more readily when we read that "yesterday, perhaps, she had been the dressed belle of Hyde Park, trimmed, powdered, patched, painted to the utmost power of rouge and white-lead; to-morrow," it is added, "she would be the cravatted amazon of the Riding House; but be what she might, the hats of the fashionable promenaders swept the ground as she passed." If pretty speaking dolls are generally as malicious as they are silly, quite as often are their husbands ruffians or idiots. One may see such dolls even in these days dashing up St. James's Street, driven, as Mrs. Robinson used to be, by the favoured amorous simpleton of the day; but we trust that our highways could not contribute such an addition to the phaeton as Miss Hawkins describes, referring to Mrs. Robinson's. "Three candidates *and her husband* were outriders, and this in the face of congregations turning out of places of worship." The husbands of such dolls now-a-days are more circumspect. When they ride, it is not as the escort to the doll and her Strephon for the nonce. They affect to be well seated on a horse called 'High Principle,' and they are in no wise troubled at the thought that the *chacune* of *chacun* "*fait payer ses atours aux amours.*"

Probably as much wit has been spoken, and as much money lost in St. James's Street as in any quarter of London. Chesterfield was remarkable both as gamester and wit; as Walpole puts it, "gaming and pronouncing witticisms among the boys of quality." Men generally lost their thousands with perfect equanimity, while others, more lucky, grew impatient at not winning faster. In the last century, one of the Thynnes withdrew his name from Brookes's because he had won only £12,000 in a couple of months!

But I have dealt enough with this theme, and I leave it with the hope that it may help readers to go the same road, and to make experience for themselves of what may turn up by passing part at least of an April day in St. James's Street.

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A Last Love at Pornic.

By FREDERICK WEDMORE, Author of 'A Snapt Gold Ring' and 'Two Girls.'

Mr. Rutterby had come by diligence from Paimbœuf. There was no traveller but himself, so they had used the "supplement." The "supplement" was like a phaeton, with back-seat always covered by its head. Mr. Rutterby had sat in the back of the supplement, and the blue-bloused driver of it had sat in front. The blue-bloused driver had held the reins loosely—the horses were steady, and knew their road over the hill from Paimbœuf to Saint Père-en-Retz, and on from Saint Père-en-Retz to Pornic by the sea—and he had leant back half the way to talk to the one traveller; and as Mr. Rutterby was quiet and reserved, the driver had chattered at will. Before the Bay of Biscay came in sight—or the little blue bay, out of the Bay of Biscay, round which Pornic rises—Mr. Rutterby could have passed a creditable examination in his charioteer's history, but the charioteer knew nothing of Mr. Rutterby.

At last, however—having exhausted conversation on his own affairs—he turned his attention to the passenger's.

"Do you go to Pornic to amuse yourself, or to be a gentleman's valet?"

"Not to be a gentleman's valet," said Mr. Rutterby, with a quiet smile at the corners of his mouth. He wore a shabby overcoat; he was faithful to an old portmanteau; and he had an income of seven thousand a year.

"Then you go to amuse yourself? You cannot amuse yourself at Pornic. There is no theatre, no billiard-table—no pretty women. Aha! It is at Nantes that you can amuse yourself. Nantes! What a city! *Ma foi!*—an inconceivable city. But Pornic!—you have made a mistake."

"I am going on a visit to Monsieur de Malmy," said Philip Rutterby.

"Monsieur de Malmy!" said the driver—De Malmy, though not rich, was a man of social importance—and the driver was no longer a comrade. That air of companionship and brotherly equality is welcome to travellers who hate gratuities and desire information. With it, a gratuity is impossible, for a gratuity implies inequality. The driver was no longer sociable. At the top of the hill he was Mr. Rutterby's brother; at the bottom he was Mr. Rutterby's servant.

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This was Pornic, if Monsieur pleased. If Monsieur pleased, it might be anything else.

At last the diligence drove up to the inn, and into its courtyard roofed with vines. From the housetop on one side to the housetop on the other, this green roof stretched over the paved courtyard, a sunny canopy, yet protecting the yard from a heat too fierce. "It is like an echo of Italy," thought Mr. Rutterby, as he got down from the "supplement," and Monsieur de Malmy kissed him on his cheek.

Then visitor and host got into the host's pony-carriage, and drove out to Saint Marie, where the Frenchman had a *chalet* every year for the bathing season.

"And your son and daughter?" asked Mr. Rutterby, inquiring for them directly he had been assured that Madame de Malmy was well.

"Alas! dear friend, my son continues to disturb me. Léon's expenditure is on the scale of a millionaire's. I am a weak man to allow it, for it cripples me very much. Ondelette, too, must suffer for it. It will reduce her dowry; and the poor girl's dowry is small enough already. She has little but beauty and a name."

"Well, that is much," said Mr. Rutterby, pleasantly.

"'Little'—you mean—in the age in which we live. But never mind, never mind. I am not anxious to marry Ondelette. Ondelette is young, and can wait. It will satisfy me for her to be always with us. I should miss her here—miss her much more at Angers. I cannot play Bach's preludes for myself. She must stay to play them to me, I suppose."

And now they were in front of the full sea. The castle, and the little bay, and the many-shuttered town, rising tall on the hill side, were left behind. They drove along the main road, out to Saint Marie, past villas and *chalets* set in pleasant gardens, where silvery grass plants grew a dozen feet high, and rose-tree and lavender, petunia and geranium, vine, acacia and fig-tree, flourished together in that genial sunshine and soft air of autumn afternoon.

"The Bay of Biscay is placid enough to-day," said Mr. Rutterby. But the summer lingers, his friend could have told him, and gives place only suddenly to winter and storm.

But here was the particular *chalet* which was home for the present. A creeper-covered villa, with pretty front, *bizarre* and individual, like all the rest in the long and varied row set in their gardens along the mile of cultured coast from Pornic to Saint Marie. A glass door from the garden led straight into the little *salon*, and there sat Ondelette.

She had just come in with a basket of blackberries, which grow in Pornic hedges big and rich as mulberries. "We will have them for dessert," said Ondelette. "You must not neglect them—my blackberries. They all came out of the lane leading to the Druids' Stones, papa. We must take Mr. Rutterby to see the Druids' Stones. Oh!

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but he doesn't care for anything except art; I forgot. Whatever can you find to do at Pornic?"

"You shall take me to see the Druidical remains, Ondelette," said Mr. Rutterby. He called her by her Christian name because he was her father's friend. He remembered the day when he had congratulated her father on her birth. He was thirty-five years her senior, for she was nineteen and he was four-and-fifty.

"Thank you," she said, "that will be for to-morrow. It will be a pleasant walk, at all events. The stones stand high on neglected ground. There are legends about them, and terrors. But I don't myself care for legends and terrors; I assure you I prefer this dear little sunny garden of a Pornic. It is all one garden, in the eye of the sun—from Pornic to Saint Marie."

"It looks like a revival of Eden, I fancy," Mr. Rutterby observed.

"With better gardening," said Ondelette, "for Adam was but a beginner. He would never have despised our Pornic and Saint Marie."

She had not seen the new guest for five years, and was very young, inexperienced, and child-like, but was as free with him—as much at home in a moment—as any London woman could have been, were she accustomed to have a dinner-party twice a week, and to talk to a dozen new acquaintances every night of the season. For Ondelette lived a free family life, quiet and intimate, whether at Angers or Pornic. Very few indeed were admitted to her home; but whoever was admitted, was at once a friend. When Mr. Rutterby went upstairs to dress himself for dinner, he carried with him the impression of her frank simplicity, and thought that he had seen a comely picture in seeing her sun-browned cheeks, her large brown eyes, very soft, overshadowed with shining hair, the colour of deep gold. Philip Rutterby knew the old French poetry, and remembered that Ondelette was of the type that Ronsard loved—seen most in the green sunny country of Anjou—*la petite pucelle Angevine.*

The little dining-room looked pleasant in the evening, with its dark buffet and deep grey wall-paper; and the lamp hung from the ceiling, throwing a bright light on the table, where silver glittered and fine glass was clear, and Ondelette's blackberries had the place of honour, and were duly flanked by blue plates with greyish-red chrysanthemums.

"It is early to make a show of your chrysanthemums," said Mr. Rutterby, "for to-morrow is but the first day of October. But your instinct of colour is exquisite, Ondelette."

"Thank you," said Ondelette. "The chrysanthemums cannot come soon enough, nor stay long enough. They are my favourite flowers. O! but that is a poor word—'*favourite*' flowers. They are more than that. But perhaps it's too early in the year for you to

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value them. They are best in their own time, after all—when the earth is gloomy, whichever way you look. In November they come like cheerfulness in winter, but always very sober—delightfully sober—like a friend who comes in your trouble."

"What is your 'trouble,' Ondelette?" asked Madame de Malmy.

"*My* trouble! O, I have no trouble. Perhaps I should not like these sad, dear, sober things, if I had. There! lie as I put you. He *will* sink down below the rest. He is so modest—his stem is not long enough. He doesn't assert himself—that chrysanthemum. He will never get on in the world."

Philip Rutterby smiled.

"You have come to a foolish place," said Ondelette. "We talk nothing but nonsense at Pornic. It is such a *pleasant* place, there is no need to be wise in it."

"But we want to hear about your acquisitions, my dear friend," said De Malmy. "What have you been picking up lately, since I was with you in London?"

One of Rutterby's few pleasures was to talk about Art: so he answered readily, "You know Crome? The chief man of the Norwich landscape school, you remember. Unless, indeed, Cotman——"

"Even *I*, in France, know Crome," said Ondelette. "Have you got a picture of his, Mr. Rutterby?"

"Two or three," he answered, glad that she cared to know. "I have had them for several years on my dining-room wall. But it is a little water-colour I was going to speak of to your father. I had one home the day before I came away. It is not at all a 'taking' drawing. But you must have what you can get of Crome, I fancy, in water-colour. He is difficult to meet with in water-colour; and when met with, perhaps more interesting than valuable. Perhaps he was not at his ease in water-colour—a little hard and dry generally, I daresay; but there are willows in the background of this drawing which have the same masterhand in them, unmistakably, as the great willow picture which is still in Norfolk. The French were right, I believe, in ranking Crome high. Ondelette, do you draw in water-colours?"

"Ondelette obtained a certificate from the teacher at the Convent," her mother informed Mr. Rutterby, with pride.

"But Sister Fidelity was always partial to me," said the girl. "I know it was not fair of her, though I *did* try my best. And if I *had* deserved the certificate, it wouldn't have been much. I ought indeed to be able to draw and to play, being such a wretched little housekeeper.

"*En verité, tu est très-mauvaise ménagère,*" her father said, gently pulling the long pendant pearl-drop in her ear. "As long as you stay at home with us, your faults in this matter may be concealed

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or overlooked; but the day on which I put on my hat, little girl, to go out and look for a son-in-law, I shall have to remember what a child you are in these matters. You would be at the mercy of your servants, Ondelette."

"Then I would have *good* servants, and should like to be at their mercy. But that will not be for a *very* long while."

"Ondelette allows herself to say silly things," remarked her mother, in an explanatory way.

"She has a very pretty talent as an artist," her father added, to Mr. Rutterby. Ondelette was used to be spoken of frankly, and these chance phrases of slight deprecation or slight praise wrought no change in her look and manner—a look and manner of much peace, breaking now and again into merriment, as when summer lightning breaks across the placid summer sky.

"Do you keep to your habit of walking after dinner?" asked Monsieur de Malmy of his guest.

"Except in winter," said Philip Rutterby. "Then I enjoy my own 'interior' as best I can—looking over my portfolios, in my chair by the fire, like the self-centred bachelor that I am."

"Do you like interiors?" asked Ondelette; "for if you do, I will show you some pretty ones in Pornic. I will take you a walk after dark some evening."

"There is no one to mind in Pornic," interpolated Madame de Malmy.

"Last year, when papa was less busy, he and I used to go our rounds after dark very often. I have hardly been at all this year. Papa is working so hard at his learned pamphlet, you know—all about the castle of Plessis-les-Tours. But I tell papa your Walter Scott has been before him in that."

"Sir Walter wrote a novel, and would have been the last person to think he had anticipated my monograph," answered the man of learned leisure. "Give us some music, my child, and place for my friend Rutterby the cosiest chair in the salon. Even your enthusiasm can hardly propose to lead him forth to-night. Ah! that is right," he added, passing into the little salon, and seeing with satisfaction the cheerful light of the wood fire—flickering, sober, and low; "to-morrow is the first of October. The nights freshen, *ma fille*."

"No lamp, De Malmy—no lamp, unless you *wish* it. It would quite spoil the charm, I fancy. I have no doubt Ondelette can play without any further light, and the effect of the 'interior' is too pretty a one to spoil." And Rutterby sat down, as he was bidden, in the cosiest chair—a bachelor, when once past forty, takes the cosiest chair without even knowing it—and De Malmy sat on the other side of the fire, and his wife between, and the firelight flickered on Ondelette's hair and cheek, as she sat down to the little straight black piano.

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"In my house I have no use for a piano," said Philip Rutterby, rather sadly. (For he was often a calmly melancholy man, of much timidity, and he never sought to hide the expression of his temperament.) "But if I had a piano, it should be a plain straight box, like your French ones, and not spoilt by our meaningless and vicious curvatures and ornaments. A piano, De Malmy, is a *cabinet for music*, and that is simply what it ought to look like."

"Are you going to listen?" asked Ondelette, quite frankly.

"Why, of *course*," answered Rutterby.

"I asked, because, if people listen, they ought to know what they are listening to. I am going to play a prelude of Bach's, first; then a *fugue* that does not belong to it."

She played. He listened and looked. She stopped. He asked her to repeat it. She played the two again, without even glancing round by way of answer to his request. And when the two were finished once more—an affair of only five minutes altogether—there was nothing said directly; and before the silence broke, Ondelette had struck the full, deep chords once more, and for the third time they heard that music's passionate undertone.

"Then you like Bach?" she said to Mr. Rutterby, now turning round from the piano, very happy and satisfied. "The man who wrote that prelude must have felt something deeply. I wonder what it was?" said Ondelette.

"You should play something else," said Madame de Malmy. "One wearies of the same thing."

"I never get tired of the sea in autumn, and its long, low roll, out here, that never stops. Why should one be tired of Sebastian Bach, at a third hearing? Eh, papa?"

It was to her father she appealed. And she knelt down by him, and put her hand in his arm, and looked into the fire, broodingly, quietly. Madame de Malmy rang for the lamp, and began to scan the pages of the 'Figaro.'

"And the monograph on Plessis-les-Tours?" asked Philip Rutterby, of his friend: "Don't let me interfere with your evening occupations."

"I have nothing to do this evening but to write two lines to an English archæologist, acknowledging the receipt of a remarkable paper on 'The use of the word *Pig*, in its connection with *Pig-cross*.' Then we will talk again, dear friend, and hear more of your acquisitions."

"Have you long been a collector?" enquired Madame de Malmy, with civil but languid interest.

"A matter of twenty years, dear Madam," Rutterby answered. "You see I have neither chick nor child, nor any relation. My little fortune has always been more than enough for my own needs, and

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men as ignorant of the world as I am do not know how to be charitable wisely to any one but themselves. So I have a good many things by this time—not of much value to others, I daresay—but I admire them myself. Moreover, I think one does some good, in guarding, reverently, beautiful things."

He always spoke of his collection modestly, but it had been brought together with the finest taste, and as to its money value, it was the result of an annual outlay of several thousands, continued now for twenty years. Experts, who had seen it, were right in judging that altogether it had cost a hundred thousand pounds, and would fetch double that money.

When Philip Rutterby went up to bed, his thoughts were full of Ondelette. A bachelor of fifty-four, in indifferent health, is particular about the disposition of his chamber, and the set of its blinds and window curtains. He does not sleep immediately in a fresh room. The fresh room breaks in a little upon his familiar ways. So Rutterby had time to think of Ondelette. Her beauty had impressed him, and he had been at home with it—generally the beauty he saw was only that which passed him by chance in the street. There was such simplicity, too, with the beauty, and with these the poetry of girl-nature never suppressed—child-nature, perhaps; hardly a woman's yet. "Were I a young man," thought Philip Rutterby, "I suppose I should fall in love with her to-day or to-morrow. But for me, that is all past—all past," he muttered to himself. He had had his passion in his youth, and had been constant to it.

And yet not quite "in his youth," for his youth had had its lighter loves—"blazes," Polonius said, "giving more light than heat, you must not take for fire." These mild thin blazes of a mild quiet temperament subsided soon, and at thirty an old friendship glowed into love, and he looked forward to happiness. The girl—a clergyman's daughter—fell suddenly ill. The marriage had to be postponed, while she wintered abroad. She came back stronger, and the marriage day was fixed upon. But she was ill again, and was hurried to Cannes, whither Philip Rutterby followed her. The new illness was a short one. She died one bright November morning, within sight of the Mediterranean. They buried her under a row of cypresses that bowed lightly over her with every wind from the mountains. These things were very deep in Rutterby's heart, and for two-and-twenty years he had been faithful to that memory.

But, of course, in two and twenty years, a structure wrought of many associations and many days had arisen and spread itself over the older memory, so that the older memory was like some verses learnt in childhood, recalled now and again, but not for service, or even pleasure, in the present life—the so-different, ever-changing present life, with the common thoughts and common needs of which this poor

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dead far away Past has nothing to do. To many, when it does come up, this older memory is like an attenuated ghost—unreal beside the gross, tangible presences of our vulgar days.

But there was nothing gross, indeed—nothing vulgar, indeed—in Ondelette and her environments. It seemed like a new poem, the bright and placid experience of the last few hours, to Rutterby. There was the sunny, unfamiliar country; the brown peasants, merry amidst their rich lands, still almost in their yielding time; there was the quaint, tall, many-shuttered town, with narrow house fronts one above the other, and hanging gardens, and small castle jutting out where the sinuous, shallow river passed into the little blue bay; there was the deep blue bay which, as you followed with keenest eye the track of its water, became somehow invisibly all one with the great outer sea. Then there had been the pleasant sight of ordered villa and *chalet*, with luxuriant garden; the villa, which was home for a while; the cosy lights and glooms of its chambers, full of objects which spoke to Rutterby of gentle life, its joys and busyness—the music—Ondelette. Yes—Ondelette.

All this produced a pleasant wakefulness. You remember Gœthe when he was at Marienbad—the summer holiday, the encounter with one forgets what German Fraülein, the stirred pulses, the half-recognised longings—and the poet was seventy-four. Philip Rutterby was twenty years younger; but no poet, you may say. No, indeed, there was little power of expression—much reticence and timid reserve, about that lonely man, whose pictures were his friends, and whose hermitage was in the heart of London.

Ondelette was in high spirits next morning, at the ten o'clock breakfast: flushed with the salt sea-bath, and the walk after it along the gleaming morning coast, sparkling with sunshine. Philip Rutterby looked at her from under his thin iron-grey eyebrows, with the quiet, steadfast examining eyes of the connoisseur of art—eyes accustomed to the peaceful contemplation of beautiful things. De Malmy noticed how closely he looked at her. Presently, when the meal was over, host and guest marched out to the beach—the beach of La Noveillard, whose sands are washed by open sea: more timid bathers bathe in the little bay by the castle, right under Pornic town; but La Noveillard was always the choice of De Malmy, who was now only too glad to spend the best hours of the day there with his friend, and watch the sunlight steal along the coast, lighting up villa and villa-garden, and the rising ground of brown ploughed land beyond, dotted with grey farms here and there, now rosy with late afternoon, and then look out to the clear sky and infinite sea, and in the far horizon the dark line of coast—the long dark streak of Isle Noirmoutier.

"You find her very beautiful—my Ondelette?" said De Malmy, when they had watched the afternoon bathers, and when he saw that

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Rutterby was no more minded than himself to read the English newspaper which they had brought out lest talk should flag.

Philip Rutterby did not often express admiration in strong words, and when he said quietly, "I should think Ondelette a genius of happiness," the phrase meant much with him.

"I have not judged it convenient to mention to her that I have just received a proposal in marriage. The young man himself takes the initiative, by writing me a letter which I have received this morning. He is called Jules Gérard—a young man of some little talent—*sous-préfet* of Saumur. Only twenty-eight years of age. I suppose he wishes to marry himself into a premature reputation for steadiness."

"What does Ondelette think of him?" asked Philip Rutterby, rather nervously.

"Ondelette, dear friend, thinks well of him, of course; for I have not educated Ondelette to think ill of anybody. My child is as naïve as your Shakspere's 'Miranda.' Besides, she is impulsive and sympathetic. She is your true friend—Ondelette—when you have talked to her quietly for a quarter of an hour."

"I have not yet done so," remarked Philip Rutterby. "And this young man—does he know her well?"

"*Ma foi!* if my child is your friend in a quarter of an hour, that is because you can know her in that time. Ondelette is excellent. I would not make a mere *mariage de convenance* for her."

"There should be fine uses for so fine an instrument," said Philip Rutterby, broodingly, and in a low voice from under his thin grey moustache.

"But I cannot regard a *sous-préfecture* as an adequate provision," De Malmy observed.

"She does not love him, then?" asked Rutterby.

"Romantic fellow! You forget of whom you speak. She is French—*ma fille—et bien élevée*. . . . Of course she does not love him. . . . Well, well, Rutterby, dear friend, we cannot settle it, out here this afternoon. Let us go in. They will be back from their drive. . . . I will consider at great leisure Monsieur Gérard's pretensions."

"And what will Madame de Malmy think of them?" asked Rutterby, rising from the low beach seat.

"She will think them unjustified. But what of that? It is I who must decide, without prejudice or influence. I have never yet taken counsel of women—especially middle-aged women. Oh! *les femmes, les femmes!—ça ne vaut pas grand' chose!*"

Ondelette and her mother had come in from their afternoon drive, when Rutterby and De Malmy re-entered the villa. And again today there was yesterday's pleasure of the cosy dining-room and lamp-

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lit *salon* afterwards. Philip Rutterby was again in his arm-chair, and was looking at Ondelette.

"Are you tired, Mr. Rutterby?" said Ondelette. "I will play us all some music, if you are."

"Will you take your promised walk with me?—your old evening round," Rutterby made answer.

"That is what I was longing for," said the girl, with glistening eyes. These young eyes, thought Philip Rutterby, can glisten with so small a pleasure.

Her hat and shawl were on her in a minute. "Do not allow our child to tire you," said Madame de Malmy, who thought proper, in the interests of respectability, and of her own age, to insist upon the childhood of Ondelette.

"Ondelette is not accustomed to make herself a burden," murmured her father, in his jealous regard for her. And he went out to the gate, and followed with his eyes the vanishing figures of his daughter and his friend.

She had put her hand at once, unasked, in Rutterby's arm, never thinking that his arm was not so much her own as was her father's.

"If he were only ten years younger!" thought De Malmy, going in, "she would be very comfortably provided for. Even now"——

"Now what sort of a house is yours?" asked Ondelette boldly, after two minutes of silence, for Rutterby did not begin a conversation. "I want so much to realise England—I have only read of it in books."

"A small house, in a quiet street, just out of a London square. There is nothing to notice in the old house, except my pictures."

"Have you any pictures by artists I know about? Oh! yes—there was Crome—I forgot."

"The landscape painter, Corot—he alone among living men. Most modern artists are too much for me, Ondelette. I am of the old school, and like the old things best."

"What else, then, Mr. Rutterby? What is it right to like—if you may always like wisely—among prints, for instance?"

"You may always like Turner's 'Liber Studiorum.' Then I have a few of Rembrandt's etchings, and some prints of Marc Antonio's. And most of Mantegna's prints I am fortunate enough to possess. That is, fortunate, if my own taste is a right one. These great men who are dead, could be vigorous without being violent. I should like to show you one of Rembrandt's landscapes—his most exquisite one."

"Is it very beautiful and rare?" she asked.

"They are all somewhat rare. But much depends on the impression. My own impression of this happens to be fine. And yet it cost me less than sixty pounds, I recollect."

"And are these on the walls?"

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"I keep them in a portfolio—the score or so of Rembrandt's etchings that I happen to have. My room is an old panelled room, less cheerful than your villa, but cheerful at night, and so still that I can hear the tick of the insect in my tapestry, on the further wall, facing the windows, where I like the effect of tapestry, as that is a bad light for pictures. There is Flemish tapestry of the fifteenth century, and some Italian of the thirteenth."

"You must be very happy with all your pictures, over there in London," the girl said.

"You cannot buy happiness by buying pictures, Ondelette," answered Mr. Rutterby, gently. They had got into the little town now.

The town leads such an open life, that you can see it all as you pass along its short and narrow irregular streets, from the little yellow-washed Hôtel de France, with its vine-covered court, in which the heavy diligence stands waiting for to-morrow, on to the slender thirteenth-century church, with the café by the side of it, and so down hill a little, past the hospital chapel, over whose door, in a scant pent-house shrine, Our Lady of Good Succour stands to watch over the port, and so on a little to where the three roads meet and the bridge joins the quiet quay, and the lazy river water laps the stonework, and little lights gleam from detached cottages that stand back from the port, and the masts of yacht and fishing-smack rise like a company of darkened spears against the clear night sky.

That was the evening round, which Ondelette took Philip Rutterby, and they glanced through many a window as they passed, for the Pornic people keep their shutters for the sun, and never trouble in the evening to shut out from view such simple "interiors" as their rooms present; and no one but here and there a passing stranger cares, as he walks, to take any heed of the sight of such familiar homes. Here was a tiny closet-like kitchen, with the fire burning low, and a woman setting things in order after the day's work, and a child sitting up at a high kitchen-table, munching its supper. "She will put him to bed in a few minutes. A creature of red fat legs—of dawning intelligence and developed appetite," explained Ondelette, whereat Philip Rutterby smiled happily. It was new to him to have these pleasant little nothings said to him confidentially.

They passed a small room where a grey-haired woman sat as one waiting, and a high-capped servant-girl had brought the last things for the evening meal. "She is waiting for her son," said Ondelette. "He works late in his study—a notary, I suppose. Mother and son you see. Mothers are always devoted to their sons. Mamma dotes upon Léon," said Ondelette, innocently. "Indeed, he was quite my own ideal, until he spent so much of papa's money. I love him very much—dear silly boy."

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Then they passed a darkened shop-front, and saw that inside only one candle lighted the family there. A small round table had been drawn out into the shop, and the candle stood on it, and on the three straight little chairs sat mother and two daughters busily at work. One snaps a thread, another reaches the big scissors, and a third looks up and laughs at some light chatter that beguiles their toil. "They are very merry in each other's company," said Philip Rutterby. "I sit alone of an evening myself, while my servants, in their servants' parlour underneath, laugh at their own jokes as merrily as these good stocking-menders here. I shall be sorry, Ondelette, when I go back from Pornic."

They made their way along the high road, following the coast, and the little salon clock struck ten as they got inside from the dark garden to the lamp-lit villa, and by that time all Pornic slept, save the few hospital watchers and the one constable trudging his rounds. Small taverns were closed, *chalets* were shut, the high road out to Saint Marie deserted for the night; but clouds out of the west had drifted up over the stars, and a wind had risen, and there was a deeper roll of dark grey sea along the shore. "The weather breaks to-night," Ondelette said, with her hand in Philip Rutterby's dry palm for good-bye. "The rainy time has come—our autumn in Anjou. But here it was summer to-day, and will be winter to-morrow."

Philip Rutterby went upstairs, and rested a minute at the still open window. The tall thin spire of Saint Marie stood out even now against a space of yet unclouded sky, and in the evening dark, the land had something of the sea's significance. He looked right and left along the coast—was somehow strangely touched by that quick change that she had prophesied. "It might have waited a day or two, and when it came, come sympathetically," he half thought to himself; "for anyhow it will be winter indeed with me when I go back, and away from her." And as imagination followed the infinite line of sea-board, to fair city and populous port and open country, out there, leagues away, in the dark, he wondered where, in all that guessed-at country, undiscovered by his eye, there was any heart as lonely as his, just now—any life that seemed so rich and prosperous, and was so yearning and so hungry. He closed the window, and drew its curtains, and shut out that thought. "A mere passing fancy," he said to himself. "Utterly idle—hopelessly idle!" She might even marry him, he imagined, loving no other; but if she did, how little time would pass before she must be sorry for her choice, in the gradual perception of his failing health and advancing age, and in the rising of some unsatisfied need! And he? Why, of course, it was a dreamer's dream, and had vanished even now.

It rained hard all next morning, and Monsieur de Malmy was occupied with his monograph on Plessis-les-Tours. But at last he

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sent a message to his old friend Rutterby, and Rutterby joined him in the room used as his study. "You look but poorly, Rutterby, this morning. Ondelette must, after all, have taken you too long a walk last night."

"No, no. But several money matters kept me awake last night."

De Malmy lifted his eyebrows in surprise. "*You!*—money matters!"

"Why, yes," rejoined Rutterby; "I fancy the possession of money is often as great a tax on a man's peace as the lack of it."

"Tell that to the gardener out there, who works for me at two francs a day. Poor devil!—I can't afford to give him any more, Rutterby."

"Casimir Delavigne is perhaps by no means a great poet," Philip Rutterby resumed, "but there are three lines in his 'Louis the Eleventh,' which struck me very much this morning: lonely wretch that I am."

"That is a strong word from you, my friend—'lonely wretch,' indeed! What are the lines?"

"These are the lines:—

> 'Après la danse, au fond de sa chaumière,
> Le plus pauvre d'eux va rentrer en chantant;
> Ah! l'heureux misérable! un doux sommeil l'attend;
> Il va dormir; *et moi*——'

They mean much or little to you, according as you take them. To me they mean very much, De Malmy. They sum up all the weariness of Louis Onze."

"You should have left the spleen in England," said De Malmy, lightly. "*Eh bien!* I have been weighing the pretensions of this young man, Jules Gérard. Here is his photograph."

"He did not give it to Ondelette?" asked Philip Rutterby, almost alarmed.

"I should think *not*, indeed! He insisted, however, upon giving it to Madame de Malmy, who values it even less than Ondelette or I would do. For myself, I think he is a very honourable young fellow. He has a good heart. He has good intelligence. He will go very far—this young man—you understand my idiom. Madame de Malmy does not attach enough importance to his future. She asks only for present position—the result *attained*—in a son-in-law. But we must not be influenced by women in these matters. Women do not count for very much—unless they happen to be Ondelettes. I am myself inclined to have the young man on a visit, and while you are here—immediately. For though you are no man of the world, you are a close observer, nevertheless."

Philip Rutterby was silent; and De Malmy continued.

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"It is true the young man is not as well-to-do, at present, as I should have liked. What is a *sous-préfecture?* Four hundred a year, and the obligation to feed several score of discontented local people, once or twice a twelvemonth, in order to report to head-quarters what is the spirit of your population. . . . But Saumur is very near to Angers, I must remember. And then, again, the little private fortune of Jules Gérard is equal to that of Ondelette. I shall still scrape together a dowry of seventy-five thousand francs, if we like Gérard better, on further acquaintance."

"I shall *not* like Gérard," said Philip Rutterby, quietly, looking out of window, and passing his thin hand over his thin iron-grey hair.

"And why?"

"Because I like Ondelette too well. . . . But this deluge will never stop, De Malmy!" he said, with quite a new impatience, turning round and leaving the room.

"Excellent man!" ejaculated De Malmy to himself. "I am not sure now but that he will propose to marry her. He is not quite as young as he might be. But what does that matter, now-a-days, when science has added ten years to the average of life? Nélaton and Ricord can keep a man going pretty long. The science of patching people up has been carried very far. And then there is no devotion like the devotion of a man who is getting well past middle-age, and has been stranded from the sea of passions—into which, however, *ce bon* Rutterby was never thrown, I am sure."

Philip Rutterby went back into the *salon* with a book. An hour passed, and Ondelette came in. "See! It is clearing," said Ondelette, "and you want a walk. You look rather miserable. Papa can lend you a mackintosh, if you think it will rain again. I will go and put on my thick boots, and we will march away to the Druid monument. Papa never walks out in the wet. He is glad of an excuse to go on with his monograph. I walk alone generally at Pornic. See, there is the sun! These gravelly lanes about here soon dry up, with the strong west wind."

So out they walked again together; a thin, wiry, anxious man, with quiet contemplative eyes; and a blooming girl, all brown and gold-coloured with the warmth of a land near the sun, and the health-bearing sea. The blackberry hedges, glistening after the morning rain, as they walked along the lanes, were not fresher than Ondelette.

She had to talk, for Philip Rutterby was silent; but she did not notice his silence, and prattled on about Pornic and Angers, the points of view here on the upland by the sea, the little old château at Angers, her brother Léon, who was "learning his law" in Paris. If he were wise, she said, he would persevere to take it up professionally; not as a mere finishing accomplishment, but as the business of his life. "For

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my brother is not *only* extravagant, you must know, Mr. Rutterby: he is very good-natured and clever besides. He is very easily influenced, except by me, who am young, and by papa who is indulgent, and by mamma, who dotes upon him so."

"Which seems a very pretty way of saying, Ondelette, that he is only capable of being influenced for the bad," responded Mr. Rutterby, with a faint, hopeless smile, which in a bolder man one would have called slightly satirical.

"No. Léon is much better than that. All depends on the people he is with. Here, early in the season, he saw something of Monsieur Gérard, who did him good for the time. I think I should like my brother to live always with Monsieur Gérard. I do not know him very well, but it seems to me just this—that I should make him the hero of a story-book, if I ever wrote one."

Rutterby made no comment, and there was silence for a minute or two. Ondelette had to begin again. "You thought that very foolish, I see by your face; and so it was, indeed, for what can we girls know about men till we are married and quite in the world? Supposing I were married to Monsieur Gérard, for instance—only I am too insignificant—no doubt I should find out that he had his faults. . . . Well, but a good man with faults would be only a hero in life, instead of a hero in a story book. Papa, now, has his faults. You, if I only knew you long enough—a certain *tristesse* is what I should complain about in you. . . . Ah! now I remember one fault which would be enough to dethrone him from my story-book—he does not care a bit for music. Fancy such a thing!"

"I *adore* music," said Philip Rutterby, scarcely knowing why he spoke so strongly.

"Here is the common, high over the sea, and here the Druid stone. Will you go down into the chamber? There are no ghosts but toads."

Philip Rutterby did not care a rush just now for Druid stones; he feigned an interest clumsily; spoke awkwardly about it, in forgetfulness of the diplomatist's creed that the use of speech is to conceal your thought. But the two went down into the cavernous chamber together—the cavernous chamber in the solitary waste land of an opulent country—and came up again, and marched homewards. Rutterby, spurred on almost to folly by a not distant rivalry, was quite aware that he had said nothing worth saying, and he welcomed a swift shower which, as they needs must shelter, must prolong his time with her. Very near them was a large homestead, with granaries, cattle-sheds, and wood-house. "The wood-house will be the place," said Ondelette, leading the way with a run, and stopping under the rough friendly roof with her feet on the floor of bare soil, dry with time. The wood was stacked round them. Light enough came in at the unglazed rough windows.

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Mr. Rutterby looked about him at the bare stone walls and high pitched roof, at the sawdust, at a neglected tressel, a neglected hatchet. "Ostade would have liked to paint this place, with its half-lights and shades," he said.

"I should so much like Ostade's pictures, then! I love anything that is tumble-down and dreary, and common, and dull, and sad," said she. Philip Rutterby was standing close to her, and now, as she spoke, looked almost anxiously at her dark brown eyes, with their long lashes giving depth to their darkness, and a sense of quietude, much in accord with her young French voice of subtle tenderness.

The shower was suddenly over. The two looked out together at the window. It was autumn sunset. Shafts of wan yellow were shot up very feebly by the spent sun, into the greyness and the calm of the high skies. The wind had gone down now, but a deep under-roll was in the sea; a turbid sea, of dark grey greens and autumn browns; angry, forbidding, and bitter and wild, along its miles of rocky coast and in unnumbered leagues in the infinite west. Ondelette saw all that, and was a little awed by it. She knew nothing of any element of storm in Rutterby's heart.

"You love anything that is tumble-down, and dreary, and common, and dull, and sad," said Rutterby, repeating her words after her, and laying his hand, which trembled a little, on Ondelette's warm hand by the rough window-sill. An anxious, nervous, over-sensitive man, snatching with useless haste at the unready Future. The quickened pulses promised a keener life, compared with which that past life must seem but as a sleep.

"Think of me very kindly when I go away, Ondelette," he said, checking himself.

"You have only just arrived. Do not talk about going," said she.

What should he say next, when her look was sympathy and kindness? Why not say, that suddenly she had become very much to him? But no. For a minute he was silent.

"I shall owe more than one pleasant time and happy thought to you, Ondelette," he said then, gravely, and lifted the young hand to his bent face, and kissed it. And they went their way.

She made her usual music in the evening, but did not try to talk with him, as he was quiet and sad; and she felt that his life must have had some sadness in it—more than she knew of—more than she could understand.

Next day, at middle-day breakfast, came a telegram for Rutterby's host. It was from Jules Gérard. De Malmy did not read it aloud, but said pre ently—in such a manner that no one but Philip Rutterby guessed any connection between the telegram and the remark—"Ha! By-the-bye, Jules Gérard is coming to stay a day or two to-morrow. Have the second spare room arranged for him, *mon amie*." It was

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to Madame De Malmy that De Malmy spoke. But Ondelette flushed suddenly, and Rutterby saw it.

"My room, which is larger, will be free; I am going to-morrow," said Philip Rutterby, resolutely calm.

"I hope there was nothing amiss in your letters?" inquired Madame De Malmy.

"I am obliged to go," answered the guest, quietly.

"I do not see at all why this young man should propose to himself to intrude on our happy little party. I am sure I wanted to see more of Mr. Rutterby myself; and with two guests, in a small villa, you know——" began Madame De Malmy, again. But her lord abbreviated her discourse by saying, in a full-toned voice, "I see the archæologists, meeting at Clisson——" And so the talk was turned to art and antiquarianism.

Why analyse Philip Rutterby's mind, or by what devious ways he had come at last, and at last suddenly, to decide to go? Of course, if he had coolly and determinately fixed on the idea of marriage, his friend and his friend's wife would have helped his claim. And Ondelette hardly knew herself; and with her dutiful love, and infinite pity, and young naïve sympathy, she might have said she would be Rutterby's wife, and, with her honour and pure-hearted dignity, have kept the promise to the uttermost, and in some sort learnt to love a foreigner, a stranger, a lonely man with his life in the Past and hers in the Future.

But how much of that love would have been spontaneous and free? Would it on his part, as time passed, and the new presence and new pleasure became familiar things of every day—would it then continually dominate, as it did in those brief hours at Pornic, over the older memory, strong with the passion of youth, and long renewed by the accumulating thoughts of many days, by the very knowledge of joys that might have been participated, and loneliness that might have been companionship? No, no. Ondelette, and all the new and possible experience with her, could be but the sweet echo of a far-away voice. And the voice was more than the echo.

In the evening Philip Rutterby followed De Malmy to his study. "Three pages and a half this morning, Rutterby," said the host, holding up the monograph in triumph. He would not ask his guest the reason of his departure. But Rutterby had come in to speak, and, like most strong-feeling men, he could speak to the purpose when the occasion moved him.

"I have thought a good deal about my going away," he said, pacing the room with his thin hands clasped behind him, "and it seems to me only right, De Malmy, that you should know the reason of it. I have had my last romance at Pornic. I have been in love with Ondelette."

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De Malmy, sitting at his writing-desk, bowed his head slightly, in token that thus far he "followed" Philip Rutterby, and that his friend might be assured of sympathetic attention.

"Madame de Malmy, if you consulted her in the matter, would probably give her vote for me, and not for this young man. You, yourself, are an old friend of mine, and it would be pleasant to you to have a tie binding us very closely together; and again, you would not unnaturally feel more immediate confidence—I do not say more permanent—in giving your daughter to a very dear old friend, than to a young man of another generation—almost a stranger—whose thoughts and ways would never be like yours and mine, De Malmy, since ideas change every year, and you and I belong, as we know very well, to an old *régime*. . . . Well, then, Ondelette, with whatever secret and unacknowledged misgivings, would probably assent. Well, well, then . . . it is *I* who refuse. Let her marry this young man, as the natural thing is."

"I understand you imperfectly," said De Malmy, apologetically.

"Let her marry this young man, as the natural thing is. As to means, you know, they will have between them eight hundred a year, which will do for the present. Afterwards—— But the vital point is just this, De Malmy: she was born to make the happiness of some life that has a Future. Well, the Future is for this young man; the Past is for me. No, no, it is not all self-sacrifice, by any means, if I go away. You remember two-and-twenty years ago—Cannes—I do not forget the Past. Why speak of that? You look at me, really, dear friend, with a very civil surprise, as if you *would* believe in some self-sacrifice after all, though you know I have not generally in life been a man called upon to make it. If this is almost my first opportunity, let me take it, then, if you will have it so. One must not regard oneself and one's own life as the centre of everything. That is the thing we rich men have to guard against—the world revolves round *us*, we think. Even if my own happiness were in question—which perhaps it is not—wouldn't Ondelette's happiness be of more importance than mine?"

He put his hand into De Malmy's, and shook it silently, for good-night.

He came down early in the morning, very pale and tired; he had seen from his window that Ondelette, with fresh morning gown, and hair in a twist of gold, was busy in the sunny garden with the grey-red chrysanthemums. "I am going to say a word to Ondelette," he whispered to De Malmy, as he met him on the stairs.

"Say what you will. You are a fine, brave fellow, Rutterby. Whatever you say she will hear considerately. She always would do that, of course; but last night I told her specially what a very fine fellow you were, Rutterby. There is no one, dear friend, whom she likes better than you. Speak to her."

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She heard his step coming towards her in the garden, and lifted her head, flushed with stooping. Did she, too, come, as her favourite flowers, like love in winter?

"Ondelette," said Philip Rutterby, "I have one quiet word to say to you before I go."

"Yes," she answered gravely, laying her hand on his, struck with his face.

"The young man who is coming here to-day comes here to ask for you to be his wife." She took her hand away suddenly; but Philip Rutterby took it back again, and did not flinch at all as he continued. "The young man, Jules Gérard, is worthy of you, my child. A manly fellow, as you and your father know, better than I do. In due time you will be his wife—you will both be very happy. I am going to start this morning, and you will think of me sometimes among my works of art—my pictures—that talk to me. And you must not pity my loneliness, you know, after all, with that companionship. For pictures are the better voices of great men. But sometimes—sometimes you will think of me, my sweet child?"

He kissed her very gravely. She looked up, with many feelings.

"Mr. Rutterby, why are you going away?" she asked, very earnestly.

He did not answer for a minute. Then he said only, "I have heard and thought of sad things—sad things, Ondelette—which I need not tell you."

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Jean François Millet,

THE PEASANT-PAINTER.

By LADY POLLOCK.

On Saturday, the 23rd of January last, a funeral procession entered the little church of Nacqueville, near Barbizon, under a beating rain and a heaven as dark as the garments of the mourners.

The body that was borne slowly through the storm to be buried was that of the peasant-painter Jean François Millet. The mourners were neither many in number nor rich in the suits of woe; mostly the members of his own family, whose tears fell for the companion they had loved, the staff they had leaned upon; but there were also present some artists who had lived at the little village of Barbizon in order to study under his auspices, and a few not unknown to fame had come from Paris, in spite of the formidable weather, to do honour to his memory.

There was, however, no crowd and no ostentatious service; Millet in death was unpretentious as in life. In the obscure village of Barbizon he had worked for the greater part of his life, quietly, almost devoutly. He was sixty years old when he died; he was born at the little town of Gréville, in La Manche, and his father was a shepherd. In his early childhood he worked in the fields; and it was not suspected that while he carried home the faggots or minded the sheep great impulses were stirring within him; that the sun and the clouds, the winds, the rain, the falling leaves and the dark earth spoke a language to him not to be understood by every man, which he was one day to interpret to a world extending far beyond the limits of Gréville and La Manche. The still Nature which Jean François loved conferred on him robust health to invigorate his aspirations. Without being unmindful of the common tasks assigned to him, he found moments during which he could pause to meditate, and as these moments became hours and days, his thought worked till it peremptorily demanded expression. The child thus prompted found instruments to use; strange, simple ones they were. He drew with lumps of chalk upon his little wooden shoes. He got some teaching every evening at a small school in the town; there he learned to read and write; but he did not care to write, he drew. Such was the beginning of this French peasant, in whom we now recognise a poet claiming close kindred with our own English Wordsworth; for the highest functions of poetry are not limited to words—the painter and the musician may fulfil them, and with immortal power make them understood.

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When the parents and the little brother of Jean François saw upon the child's sabots, and upon the walls and floors of their cottage, the images of familiar objects, they perceived that he had some gift exclusively his own; and as time went on, and occasional passers-by stopped to look at the rude sketches of the peasant boy, a conviction grew apace among his associates that he was destined for a life apart from theirs. At the age of fifteen the longing of his heart imperiously asserted itself; he knew, and it was acknowledged by all about him now, that he had in him the genius of a painter.

It is not often that extraordinary endowments fail to excite sympathy, and in Millet's case a municipal council of the town where he was born (Gréville) bestowed upon him the sum of 600 francs to enable him to travel to Paris, there to learn the mechanism of the art which as yet he practised only from the untaught yearnings of his soul. He went to Paris, and became a student in the *atelier* of Paul Delaroche. From this master Millet learned to draw correctly, and the contrast there was between the disposition of the two painters may have had its use. The classical beauty of Delaroche's compositions exhibited to the young peasant a perfection different from that which he had discerned in the shows of Nature. The power of symmetry, the value of just proportion, the importance of exact definition, became evident to him, and in some early works he actually handled subjects such as Delaroche loved to deal with. One of these pictures, little known now, was 'Œdipe détaché de l'arbre,' and another 'Les Juifs à Babylone;' he also produced some charming works in the style of Diaz, and even painted to order such subjects as 'Women Bathing,' in the manner of Boucher. But all this was uncongenial to him; the current of his thought still followed the patient labour of the peasantry. Through the folds of classic drapery he saw the shepherd's cloak meeting the wind, through the stately compositions of finely grouped castles, rivers, and mountains; there was still fixed in his mind the green grass of his native fields, or the dark furrows of the upturned earth, or the solitary tree which stood in the street where he was born, and the little church-steeple, with its bell, at the sound of which his mother bent her head in prayer. He could not become the disciple of any established school of painting. As soon as he had acquired the knowledge of anatomy and skill in handling the pencil and brush, he left Paris; the brilliancy and fervid life, the glitter of that sunniest of cities, was distasteful to the brooding nature of this solitary worker, and he thought of Fontainebleau as a refuge from the vivacity which overwhelmed him, and as a place sufficiently near the centre of action to insure a ready supply of all the materials of art, and a continued intercourse with such artists as were sympathetic to his imaginative mind. The little town of Fontainebleau seems to us quiet enough, and picturesque enough for any poet or painter to live

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in. Bordered by a forest vast in extent and varied in beauty, it contains within itself also an interesting old *château*, the nucleus of which, the old chapel, was built as far back as the time of Louis the Seventh; and which, as it expanded into a luxurious palace, became the favourite country residence of all the successive sovereigns of France down to the time of the Emperor Napoleon the Third; and then, too, the public Gardens of Fontainebleau are the most charming to be found anywhere —symmetrical, yet not too stately; glowing with colour even in the autumn season, with broad walks giving ample room for flowing skirts, and bordered by avenues of elms where lovers may whisper in peace. However, the few shops of the straggling streets, the occasional arrival of travellers from Paris, the townspeople going to and fro, the rattle of a thriving tradesman's cart, with all the slow stir which indicates the life of a country town, oppressed the painter, and he searched the neighbourhood of the Forest for some more tranquil resting-place. He found it in the primitive village of Barbizon—lying to the west of Fontainebleau—and there he established himself; there he lived, worked, and died. The fields which surrounded his dwelling were more dear to him than the forest; he loved their space and far-stretching horizon, and he returned willingly to the contemplations of his childhood. Every rural object told to him some story: the beetroot-planter; the potatoe-digger; the tired haymakers asleep, the shepherd bending under the storm; the patient donkey carrying home the overworked woman, old before her time; boys digging, with worn aspect and unflagging industry; the peasant's cottage, where only the baby rests—such were the subjects in which Millet found the deepest interest, and which he invested with extraordinary beauty. His first aim was truth; the simple objects which he saw in his daily life he drew simply as he saw them, but every phase of Nature, every human form, every flower of the field, every implement of toil, every gray cloud or clod of earth, took from the disposition of his own mind a particular significance.

In long solitary meditation he found his concentrative power, similar to that with which Wordsworth evoked secret memories out of rude forms, and drew from what is called common life the sweetest spirit of humanity. Some of the best known of Millet's pictures are, 'Le Semeur,' 'The Sower' (date 1852); the 'Paysage de Novembre,' 'Landscape in November' (1853); the 'Paysan greffant un Arbre,' 'Peasant grafting a Tree' (1855); 'Les Glaneuses,' 'The Gleaners' (1857); 'Femme faisant paître sa Vache,' 'Woman leading her Cow to Pasture' (1859); 'Fondeuse de Moutons,' 'Woman Sheepshearing' (1861); 'Le Berger ramenant son Troupeau,' 'The Shepherd bringing Home his Flock;' 'Le Paysan reposant sur sa Houe,' 'The Peasant resting on his Hoe' (1863); 'Le Veau,' 'The Calf' (1864); 'L'Angelus' (1867); 'La Leçon de Tricot,' 'The

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Knitting Lesson' (1860), &c. All these are homely themes, not suggestive of stirring thought or fine emotion to a superficial observer. Whence, then, did Millet summon that poetical beauty which is the great characteristic of his compositions? How was it that, in the representation of a life which possessed in itself little to charm, and something to repel, he conveyed to the mind of the spectator an infinite tenderness, a sweet sadness, a sense of brotherly love? This feeling was called up by the deep compassion of his own nature; by his fervent sympathies and his devout faith. 'L'Angelus' may be taken as a marked example of the ideality which he lent to the ordinary. Here we see a great ploughed field, with a grey sky, a somewhat misty atmosphere, a little church in the distance, and just along the horizon a silver gleam of light. In the middle of the field stand two peasants, a man and a woman, who for a moment suspend their labour, and bend their heads reverentially at the sound of the church bell. The lines of toil are stamped upon the faces of these two, and upon their figures; the colourless sky, the wide-spreading dark earth, which they have been compelling to fruitfulness, monotonous and dreary, tell the tale of the peasant's life; the gleam of light over the little church, and the expression of religious faith in the workers as they listen to the Angelus, relieve the gloom of the scene, and indicate the hope which makes those dark days of toil endurable. Labour and patience, that was what Millet saw before him; over these ideas and their associations his sadness brooded, and out of these his fine spirit and his extraordinary skill of hand extracted a beauty so profound, that to see it unmoved is impossible. Eyes which can look complacently at pictures like 'The Roll Call,' or 'The Death of Nelson,' or 'The Death of General Wolfe,' or such-like heroic displays, may drop tears at Millet's solemn, almost unintentional pathos. Sometimes he rouses emotion by the idea which he calls up of Nature's bounteous gifts, as in his picture of 'Le Printemps.' Whether he chooses the bright or the mournful aspect of country life, he is always true: he is never sentimental. The feeling by which he engages our sympathies is profound; he does not strive to exhibit or make the most of it, he only allows it to work out its own expression. Sentiment is a shred of emotion decked out so as to attract attention. Trick is a particular mode apart from truth, and generally an exaggeration of truth adopted to excite surprise and to produce immediate effect. There is a little touch of this fault in the scattered lights of a very great landscape painter, Millet's dear friend, and a noble-hearted man—Jean Baptiste Corot. There is none of it in any production of Millet's.

In the now famous picture called 'Le Veau,' where the new-born calf is being carried in a barrow to the field, and its mother is walking alongside with outstretched neck licking the little one, there is no

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effort to impart a human expression to the cow; it is the unforced image of maternity and its simplicity; and the veraciousness of every detail of the scene produce a pleasing, sweet impression, such as we feel in a rural walk where such things are, and in the presence of a mind which is capable of suggesting without pressing upon us the sense of beauty.

This sense was so paramount in Millet's mind, that there was hardly any object from which he could not distil some unexpected charm. There are painters who delight in distortion, and adopt it as a substitute for force. It has no doubt a disagreeable energy, which in some instances strikes the spectator so sharply, that he is willing to accept astonishment for admiration, and to attribute superhuman power to the painter who is so unflinching in his antagonism to the beautiful. There was much more matter for honest wonder and reverence in the strength of Millet's work. Any one who has looked attentively at his drawing of the 'Woman Churning,' exhibited lately at M. Durand Ruel's collection of French masters in Bond Street, will at once recall the marvellous skill with which he has made the subject attractive. No beauty of flesh is to be found in the face or arm of the woman who is at work; her dress, of coarse materials, is tucked up over a short petticoat, without any apparent thought of draping; but in the action of the figure there is the union of force with grace, and in the thin face an anxious assiduity which interests the observer, and harmonises with the whole scope of the picture. The garment gathered in, seemingly only for convenience, makes a curve of singular beauty across the under skirt, and the thin toiling arm has a real grace in its bend. The drawing is slightly tinted with that perfect art or instinct of just proportion which always directed Millet's hand.

The antithesis of Jean François Millet is Gustave Doré, with his rapidity of production, his violent effects, his exaggerations, his false anatomy, his impossible oppositions of light and darkness, his blotches of paint laid on to catch the eye of the ignorant—his abandonment, in short, of his natural gifts to that one idea of quick creation which means money-making. The 'Christ Leaving the Prætorium' is perhaps the most glaring example yet exhibited of M. Doré's false effective style. There is no finish in the work at all; it is inexact in perspective; in some of the figures there are impossible muscles, in others impossible attitudes; and the principal figure is hardly drawn at all. No serious critic could approve of the work; but most careless spectators admire it because of its flash of sentiment, its gorgeousness of falsehood, and its clever appeal to a hurried glance. As the world in general dislikes attentive thought, it is pleased to find something which will not bear meditation, and is prepared with ready rapture to applaud that semblance of sublimity which is a daring indifference to

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truth. M. Doré has considerable cleverness, and has ideas which, if he had possessed the fortitude of genius which rejects bad work, might have made him a great master. He has chosen the rapid road to public favour, and his name will fall as fast into the depths of oblivion as it has risen swiftly to the heights of renown.

Millet was a slow worker; he would keep a picture long on his easel strictly meditating, seeking out its beauties as he sought them in Nature. He used to say that he loved to look at a tree growing on his canvas; if he saw anything untrue in his composition he would sacrifice his picture and begin again. This was not lucrative labour, and he started in the world poor; his life was frugal; his desire did not extend beyond the decent support of his family, but this desire, humble though it was, could not always be gratified. The extraordinary qualities of his art were only recognised by degrees, and he was not himself aware of his money-worth. He married young, and had fourteen children, nine of whom survive, so that even as his reputation augmented the painter was content to accept small sums of ready money rather than wait for large ones. Most of his great pictures were thus pledged in advance, and he would take £250 for a work which, passing into other hands, was afterwards sold for £2000. There is a large collector of pictures now in Paris who is said to possess £30,000 worth of Millet's productions, for which he has given only £3000; this is a distressing fact.

Jean Baptiste Corot, who knew the privations which Millet and his family had patiently borne, and who loved the painter for the qualities which made him poor, bequeathed to Madame Millet such a legacy as he could afford. Will the collector who has prospered by the indigence of a great genius bestow any of his gains upon a family left to struggle against hard circumstances? This is a question which remains to be answered. Did any of the dealers who enriched themselves by the necessities of the artist know that there were days when he and his had only a loaf of bread and a jug of milk to divide between them all? Did they know that on some occasions he had to bear bitter words and brutal treatment from a landlord asking for his rent? and that while they paraded their easily acquired precious Millets at successful sales, a quarter of the profit they made would have given relief to the hardly-pressed painter?

Millet's nature, gentle and noble, was uncomplaining, and he had comfort in the devoted love of his home. He had also one most dear friend living close to him. This was Theodore Rousseau, who, both by the truth of his pictures and the eloquence of his enthusiasm, encouraged him in the highest aims of art, and warmed his heart with something better than popular applause for every good work done.

Round these two masters gradually gathered a group of disciples

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and students, till the village of Barbizon became a colony of painters, and the school of Nature grew to be called *l'École de Fontainebleau*. It had as many antagonists as Wordsworth's Lake school in poetry; but it gradually made its way. One very remarkable artist, Jules Breton, drew his inspirations from Millet; but observing that the public was not yet prepared for this artist's unflinching veracity, he made his peasants less like truth and more like the drama; his creations were far indeed from the impossible pastorals of the Trianon school, but they resembled the groups of a skilful theatrical manager. They are cleverly drawn, well painted, but false representations of life.

Edouard Frère, whose pictures are better known in England than Breton's, must be regarded as a disciple of Millet's; but his pictures are feeble in treatment compared to those of his master; he gives prettiness for force, and though he is for the present more popular in drawing-rooms, he will be little thought of in the time to come, when Millet will be looked to as one of the few prominent leaders in the cause of true art.

Among English painters, Mason is the most remarkable follower in Millet's footsteps; he is less grave and less forcible, but he seeks the truth and finds it, and many of his rustic scenes are full of tenderness and homely beauty.

Any one who has had the privilege of visiting Millet at his own house while he was at work, will never forget it; one occasion, unimportant enough possibly to the mind of the reader, but much valued by the writer, may be mentioned, when an introduction to the patriarch of Barbizon was the object of a pleasant drive through the Forest of Fontainebleau, then rich in the deep hues of autumn. The village of Barbizon, surrounded by all possible beauty, is not in itself picturesque; it is composed of two long, occasionally broken rows of uninteresting buildings, without any distinctive feature; one side of Millet's house abutted upon this street, and a low-walled garden separated the door of the studio from the roadway. Very unlike the luxurious studios we see in London and Paris—more like a carpenter's workshop, uncarpeted, undecorated, the ceiling low, and no furniture at all, nothing but a few wooden chairs and shelves, and one large press containing his favourite pictures. But on the walls were hanging some fine copies of Michel Angelo, and on the shelves were many casts from the Antique.

In the middle of the room, near the window, which was lighted from the street, the painter stood at work; on a chair by his side, reposing its sleek head on the master's cap, a tortoiseshell cat lay comfortably curled up.

Millet's reception was frank and courteous. He put down his brush, and set aside his engrossing occupation, to meet a stranger without any sign of discomposure. His figure was erect, and of a

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square build; his face handsome, with large grey eyes, a wide imaginative brow, white hair, a bright complexion, and a smile most true and winning, not used too often, coming, as all things came with him, from his inmost soul. A real interest in his works soon made itself felt by him; and he was ready to show all that he had in his room. A wonderful unfinished picture, which he then called 'Le Coup de Vent,' excited an emotion in the spectator difficult to describe. The subject was a great oak uprooted by a hurricane, and in the act of falling; a man running away from it; a dark storm sky; everything under it driven, tortured, torn; a beautiful country struck with a sudden despair; every flower, every leaf, even the herbs growing on the bank, sharing in the tragic passion of the scene.

It was perhaps the want of words to express adequate admiration for this masterpiece which made one present ask of the painter:

"*Est-ce dans la forêt?*"

"Madame," replied Millet, fixing his eyes on the speaker with mild surprise, "*C'est partout.*"

The other subject on the easel was in direct contrast with this tempest-tossed landscape—nothing more than a flock of sheep feeding, owing its interest to the tender light and sense of serenity with which the canvas seemed instinct. Millet spoke of the quiet happiness which he desired here to represent; and was still speaking when the door of the studio opened and let in a traveller, coxcombical in dress and fluttering in manner, who talked as he proceeded, hardly pausing to take breath, bowing low to the master, and so voluble in compliments that only the last was heard:

"*Enfin, Monsieur, j'ai la maladie des Millets.*"

The slow, calm manner of the artist made the officious zeal of the visitor, who was perhaps a picture dealer, seem very ridiculous, as he answered:

"*Mais, Monsieur, prenez donc de la médecine.*"

Protestations followed thick and fast, in the course of which the new-comer was left alone with his patient listener.

Exactly above the sudio of Jean François Millet was that of his eldest son, who inherits a good deal of his father's talent, if not his singular genius.

Genius rarely extends itself by succession in one direct line; and if Millet's son ever does anything great, it will probably be in treating subjects of a different class from those which have caused his father to be regarded in France as foremost in a new school of painting.

Millet, thinking always more of others than himself, when taken ill two years ago, said to his doctor:

"Docteur, guérissez-moi: je n'ai pas le droit de mourir; it faut que je vive pour ma famille. . . ."

The character of the man is shown in this simple sentence.

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Some weeks since, at the French Gallery in Bond Street, M. Deschamps, the accomplished secretary, was able to show to any lover of art interested in Millet some of his most beautiful drawings and etchings, but now they have all been claimed in Paris, where before long an exhibition composed exclusively of his works will probably be opened.

His etchings are singularly fine, careful, and delicate. On one occasion a beautiful specimen of his skill in this way lay at his feet uncared for, while he was working with fervour upon a fresh subject on his easel. His brother, himself an artist now, picked up the paper, and said:

"Oh, how very beautiful!"

"Do you think so?" replied Jean François; "then keep it for yourself."

Just then an American visitor entered the studio, and, seeing the etching, burst into eloquent enthusiasm, upon which the brother gave it up to him. Finally this little neglected thing was sold for one hundred pounds.

It is likely that an exact biography will soon be published of the great master, the outlines of whose life are merely indicated in this paper.

But perhaps those who take the trouble to read even this attentively may find in its pages good reason for wishing to know more, and for desiring to see the productions which have gradually attained a high reputation among the most thinking artistic portions of the community both in Paris and London—a reputation which will augment as time goes on. It is the fate of the noblest workers in this world not to grasp the most immediate profit or honour:

> "The truly great, the genuine, the sublime,
> Wins its slow way in silence."

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Moussirender Rheinwein.

Pour out the bright nectar,
To lay the grim spectre
That lurks in the depths underlying our mirth;
Forget for a minute
That life has aught in it,
Save all that is fair on the face of the earth.

Outstrip melancholy,
We'll catch flying folly,
And with her away to her kingdom take wing;
And gay songs and dances
Shall banish our fancies,
That life has a burden or love has a sting.

Our friends Care and Sorrow
May find us to-morrow,
To-night if they seek us we'll drown them in wine,
And all our troubles
Shall die with the bubbles
That float on the foaming life-stream of the Rhine.

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An Answer.

You ask me, wondering, why I sing,
  And why my lips in laughter part;
The ripples of my mirth all spring
  From the deep sorrow at my heart.

A smile is easier than the tear
  That serves to keep sad memories green,
And always through what is, I hear
  The echoes of what might have been.

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The Shah, and what he did not see.

In the olden times, foreign monarchs rarely visited England. When they did come it was generally with a purpose. They usually went only to Canterbury. They made brief stay, saw little, learned nothing, and went home again. The first King of France, or rather French King—for a large portion of that country belonged to England and to powerful French nobles—who visited England was Louis the Seventh. You have only to look at any history of the reign of our Henry the Second and of the life of Thomas à Becket to know why Louis came hither. Chiefly, however, it was his wish to visit the famous shrine of his friend à Becket, and to be reconciled to his old enemy, Henry the Second, who had married Louis's divorced wife, Eleanor, and took with her the Duchy of Aquitaine.

It was in the month of August 1179 that Louis landed at Dover, looking very much the worse for the shaking he had got on the sea, and his followers looking as dreary, as draggled, and as dumpish as their master. Henry met these illustrious strangers in bustling Dover, and when the travellers had dried their plumes and recovered from their sickness, they all went in magnificent procession to Canterbury. The French King was conspicuous for the simplicity of his attire. He was in the garb of a pilgrim, and he ought to have gone a-foot, but he didn't. The royal visitor behaved, however, like a princely pilgrim when he reached the shrine of St. Thomas. He contributed cups of gold, jewelry, and money, and the French nobles were equally profuse. Louis went further—he endowed the convent with the yearly rent of a hundred measures of wine, to be enjoyed by the members for ever.

The great incident in this visit lay in a gift which King Louis was right loath to make. He had, in a ring on his finger, a jewel called the 'Regalia of France.' It is diversely described as a "carbuncle" and a "diamond;" but all agree that it was as big as a hen's egg. The saint coveted the jewel. The King crooked his finger to keep it there; nevertheless, the stone leapt from its setting and fastened itself firmly into the shrine, where for centuries it was one of that shrine's glories, and the perfect delight of all beholders—especially at night, when it blazed like a fire. In return, the saint promised the sovereign, who hated the sea and the suffering brought by cross-

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ing on it, that he should safely traverse the Straits, from Dover to Whitsand or Calais, without sickness or shipwreck, and Louis was fain to be content therewith. His whole stay in England did not exceed four days, during which he only saw Canterbury and the road that lay between it and Dover.

What may be said of the brave and honest French King, John? The indiscreetly valiant prisoner of the Black Prince, at Poitiers, was a royal visitor in spite of himself. A voyage of seven weeks brought him, in 1357, from Bordeaux to Sandwich, and after nearly another month John entered the palace of the Duke of Lancaster—at the Savoy, on the Strand of the Thames. For a year John and his fellows in captivity lived like prisoners at large. He was universally popular. He dined at court and in the city, he hunted, read, and when too idle for aught besides, he made love to a considerable number of ladies, who were quite ready to have love made to them.

From the Savoy John was transferred to the castle of Hertford, subsequently to that of Somerton, in Lincolnshire; later (when there was talk of a "rescue") to the castle of Berkhampstead, in Herts; and lastly, to the Tower of London. From this last palace-prison he was released, in May, 1360, when the peace of Bretigny was an accomplished fact. The price of his ransom was 600,000 gold crowns; and in June John left Dover for Calais, and also a promise to pay. Visconti, Lord of Milan, undertook to find the money, if John would give his daughter Isabel to Visconti's son, Giovanni, and in this way the affair was brought to a conclusion.

In those old days, other monarchs who came to England thought little of London—Canterbury was the haven of their hopes. Thither came Sigismund, and later, in 1520, the Emperor Charles the Fifth. There had been a pretty game played previously between that potentate and Henry the Eighth. The first pretended not to be coming to England, the latter feigned to be not expecting him. One fine week in May, Henry and a brilliant retinue went leisurely and joyously from Greenwich to Canterbury, and when the court was making the ancient city joyous by its presence and attending profits, news suddenly came that the Emperor Charles, with a squadron of Spanish ships, was anchored in the harbour of Hythe. He sent word that on his way to visit his Netherlandish dominions, he had heard that his royal aunt and uncle were with their court not far from the coast of the Channel, and he burned with desire to see them. Wolsey was despatched to receive the great Emperor, and he stood on the beach at Dover as Charles stepped ashore from his barge. It is said that Charles and Henry rode side by side from Dover to Canterbury, the road between which places was well accustomed to splendid pilgrim travellers. The ride was made on a Whitsunday morning. One

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canopy covered them both as they entered Canterbury by St. George's Gate. Wolsey led the way; crowds of Spanish and English nobles were gathered around for honour and defence. The streets were blocked up by richly-attired clergy. The people were where they could find foothold, or hung, as it were, out of the windows and over the roofs. At the west door of the cathedral they alighted from their horses, and Wareham, the Archbishop, conducted the sovereigns to the shrine, where they said their devotions, and made their offerings. But Charles had come for another purpose—a purpose neither of curiosity nor pious feeling. He fascinated Henry by his flattery and frank, genial manners, and he gained over Wolsey—in other words, he bought the Cardinal by gifts and money and promises, to be with Charles against France and her interests in connection with England; and having effected all the ends he had in view, Charles, after four days of feasting and intrigue in the city of Canterbury, rode contentedly (and superbly attended) to Sandwich, where his fleet lay, on board of the leading ship of which he took his imperial way over the seas to his paternal dominions in the Netherlands.

The royal and visiting sovereign who profited most by his visit to England was the Philip of Spain who came over to wed Mary Tudor. What a spasm, however, went through the heart of poor England when that Spanish match was first mooted! What a cry went up against wedding with bloody, merciless, arrogant Spain! What blood was shed after Wyatt strove by rebellion to keep the gyves of bigoted Spain off the limbs of England. The English people who had supported Mary against Lady Jane, because the more legal right was with Mary, cried out against the project of binding gloomy Mary to the more gloomy Philip. When these two young people met, Mary kissed the suitor. The lover was actually saluted by the lady, and in that kiss Mary sealed her subjection to the King of Spain. Philip's name was before Mary's in all things. While he remained among our forefathers, he alone was sovereign, and when he left, never to return, he had laid the grounds of the persecution which the queen carried on out of love for him, and which has gained for her the name of Bloody Mary.

Let us, however, come to visiting kings of later years. The French Revolution, which began in the last century and is not yet nearly finished, brought into Buckinghamshire Louis the Eighteenth; after him Charles the Tenth, and, after Charles the Tenth, Louis Philippe; but these hardly come within the category of kings, for Louis had then never exercised sovereign rights, and Charles and Louis Philippe had been deprived of them. The best thing I know of the first monarch is, that after he really became so, in his kingdom of France and Navarre, Fouché, whom he had taken into his service, warned

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him to be on his guard against his old secretary and co-mate in exile, Savary. The lynx-eyed minister of police informed the king that all the time the royal exile was in England his secretary was in Fouché's pay, and sent him twice a week details of the king's daily life. Louis replied: "I can tell you more about that than you know yourself. The letters Savary wrote to you I dictated; and the money you sent we divided between us—as we both stood much in need of it!"

Since the days of the Bourbons, travelling kings have been commoner in England than they once were at the *table d'hôte* in Venice. Like the doctors in 'The Northern Farmer,' "they come an' they go, and take it easy and free;" and people generally become indifferent, used-up in the article of kings. Our attention, indeed, was aroused when the Khedive of Egypt came hither, and the ruler of the old Pharaoh-land was lodged in an English caravanserai. We were still wider awake when the Caliph of Islam, the Grand Sultan, was among us. We were a little disappointed indeed that the great Turk, instead of appearing in caftan, papouches, turban, and a breastplate of jewelry, trotted about Wimbledon Common, or rode into the City, in a modern frock coat, trousers, and fez-cap, and puzzled people to decide which he the more resembled, a Jewish banker in the City or a Greek merchant at Manchester. But these and others were eclipsed by the long-expected arrival of the ruler of part of old Assyria, the representative of Zoroaster, the descendant of heroes more or less heroic, the Shah of Persia, who left his home to see the world, and who has recorded the few things he did see. What a book he might have made of the things he did *not* see!

It is proposed to notice the latter; but a word or two may be fittingly spent on the illustrious stranger himself.

Whoever edits the next edition of royal and noble authors will have to inscribe with some testimony of respect the name of Nasr-ed-Din, the fourth Shah of the present Turcoman dynasty in Persia. When only eighteen years of age, he ascended the throne in 1848; and just a quarter of a century later, after having travelled much in the East, he fulfilled a long-cherished desire by visiting Europe. He reached England on the 18th of June, 1873, and remained here eighteen days.

It must be confessed that before he was safely back again in his own country, the world had got tolerably tired of his name, his doings, and himself. Were he to return among us, he would find himself to be an illustriously-obscure individual. Nasr-ed-Din, however, came back in another shape than his own; namely, in the form of an elegantly-got-up book, quite oriental in its taste; and he tells us therein what his impressions were of the thousands of things he beheld, and of the hundreds which were past his Turcoman under-

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standing. In such a guise he is a welcome guest, and he is likely, in his book, to remain so, as long as the volume lasts.

One question naturally suggests itself: Is the book authentic? Is the so-called "verbatim translation" genuine? Of this there can be no question. This record of his travel—copies of his diary, which the Shah kept most carefully posted—was communicated to the Persian public in the official part of the *Teheran Gazette*. The written diary commenced in devout seriousness, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." The Shah writes it, "In auspiciousness and sanctification, under the will of God the Most High, the All-Powerful, the Matchless, the Forgiving, the Beneficent." The details are written with the help of God and His merciful aid! His last words, recording his safe return under the roof of his palace at Teheran, are:—"We went to our tower, mounted to our apartments, and there again poured out our heart in thanks to God. At night there was a general illumination, and we slept in peace. Praise be unto God Most High!"

This devotional spirit seems to be something more than a mere formality. The Shah's piety, moreover, had no taint of bigotry in it. At Moscow he worshipped in both mosques. He went first to that of the Shí-ites (followers of Ali), of whom he is one; and next to that of the Sunn-ites, or so-called "Orthodox," followers of Abu-Beker, father-in-law of Mahomed. The two sects generally curse one another with a vigour nearly equal to that exercised by opposing Christians; but they adore one and the same God, and reverence one and the same Prophet; and Nasr-ed-Din, like a sensible and religious man, not troubling himself about questions that the two sects go mad and blasphemous upon, worshipped God, in the Prophet's name, in both mosques. Nothing like such stupendous good sense can Christians hope to see in England, unless the Pope should come among us, and after attending at Cardinal Manning's Pro-Cathedral in the morning, should drive over to Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle in the afternoon.

The Shah's respect for religion is, moreover, not confined to his own. He never has occasion to refer to the name of Jesus or to that of the Virgin Mary, without preceding each name by the words "The Most Holy," and following up each name with the exclamation, "On whom be peace!" When we remember how exceedingly rude we civilized and highly-taught Christian people are to all founders of religious systems but our own, we cannot help feeling a little shame, as the Shah teaches us such better manners. We have lately exhibited a little civility to Buddha, but we can scarcely be said to be anything but the reverse of polite to "Mahomet the Impostor," as school-books call him. We rather contemptuously pray for "all Turks, Jews, and heretics," as if they were plunged in the deepest iniquity, and we

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suppose that any one of our bishops would rather choke than bring himself to say, "the Most Holy Mahomed, on whom be peace!" In one circumstance, the Shah resembles a good many Christians. We allude to contrasting entries in his diary; as, for instance, where he says he will do such a thing, or go to such a place, "God willing;" while, on other occasions, he says he "*must*" do such things or go somewhere. This is only the old story of a gospel note-writer who announced to a friend, "I will be with you on Tuesday (*D.V.*); but, at all events, on Wednesday."

The Shah left Teheran on the 19th of April last year, with a cold in his head. It will "disillusionize" some people to be told that even in the month of May, in Persia of the Poets, the cold was often so intense that the travellers (nearly sixty in number) were benumbed with it. The Shah himself probably could not quote Pope's line as applicable to his Majesty—

"The fur that warms a monarch warmed a bear."

When he fairly began to see the world—that is, as soon as Russia opened all she had to show—the Shah began a course which was pretty closely followed in all other countries. He saw reviews, heard operas, beheld ballets, sauntered through museums, walked through hospital wards, went to the local "Zoo," watched manœuvres of the fire brigade, looked at fireworks and illuminations, and went to bed with a thankfulness that there was an end of it all, for that day. But His Majesty saw as much of the world as the stoker of a steamship does who circumnavigates the globe, and learns so little about it. Nasr-ed-Din was not unconscious of the fact with regard to himself. He issues from a museum of varieties in Russia with the remark, "As we merely looked on them for a moment, we really comprehended nothing about them." When he got time to enjoy what was before him, he understood it thoroughly. Thus, of Baden-Baden, he says, "It has a climate like that of Paradise, a river like that of Shahristanak! In verity, it is not a town with the contemplation of which one can tire. For lovers, pleasure-hunters, sybarites, it is a capital nook," &c., &c. In Germany, but especially in Prussia, we heard that the Shah had been dragooned into his amusements. His hosts directed; their guest was not consulted. In little Belgium it was different. Accordingly he says, "What a difference has the All-wise and Almighty Creator placed between the two nations and the two countries. Man's mind is lost in amazement thereat."

When the Shah left Ostend for Dover, the Governor made what the Shah calls "an excessive speech." This talking clearly bored the illustrious traveller. We gather this much from the account of his tarrying at Dover. "They told me that the Governor of Dover had

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prepared a speech 'which he must recite.'" At length he was off, anxious to see the country, "but the train travelled at so furious a rate, it was impossible for me to distinguish any place;" and he found the "holes in the mountains," or the tunnels, "suffocating." When he encountered crowds, he was struck by "the nobleness, greatness, gravity and sweetness" which shone out from the countenances of both women and men; their enthusiasm equally delighted him. Throughout, he makes a peer of the then premier, "Lord Gladstone;" and he was himself proud to be made, by the Queen's hand, a Knight of the Order of "the Stocking-tie."

He was rather surprised to see the Lord Mayor in a robe, "the hinder skirt of which was very long and trailed on the ground." At the Guildhall ball, there is record of the "dinner after midnight," when he mistook the "toast-master" for a deputy Lord Mayor, ruling the assembly from behind the Shah's chair to do him honour. Of the first day in the week he remarks, "As it was Sunday, the streets were empty, all the people being in the fields and lanes, taking walks." English names often come to grief at the diarist's hands, and "Fibs Hurubi," for Admiral Phipps Hornby, is a sample of a bushel tolerably full. He is quite sure that he would have been drowned at the Portsmouth naval review, by a blow from the paddle-wheel of the *Victoria* (which is said to be a screw-steamer), "but for the intervention of God the Most High." And at the hurrahs of the crowds who greeted his arrival at Windsor, "the horses of my carriage took fright, and began to act as though mad."

His Majesty's charger, which had come with him from Persia, would not condescend to be affrighted at anything. This indifference is laid by the Shah to the long journeys and shakings which Blaze had encountered on shipboard and in railway-boxes. Sooty Manchester elicited this *naïve* remark from him, "The whole of the ladies at that place at most times wear black clothing; because, no sooner do they put on white or coloured dresses than, lo! they are suddenly black." He was delighted with the care taken of the sufferers in hospitals; the anxiety to relieve them from pain and anguish, and the readiness and activity to save life which he saw manifested by the manœuvres of the Fire Brigade. "But," says this benighted heathen and barbarian potentate in our enlightened and Christian land, "the wonder is in this, that on the one hand they take such trouble and originate such appliances for the salvation of man from death, when, on the other hand, in the armouries, workshops, and arsenals of Woolwich, and of Krupp in Germany, they contrive fresh engines, such as cannon, muskets, projectiles, and similar things, for the quicker and more multitudinous slaughter of the human race. He whose invention destroys more surely and expeditiously prides himself therein,

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and obtains decorations of honour." Aye, or wherefore live we in a Christian land? Why, it is said that when Krupp heard of what his great guns had done at Sadowa, he cried at the thought that they had not destroyed man, made in God's image, at an infinitely greater rate. Our admiration of the Shah's wisdom, however, is a trifle shaken when we find that though he patronises a hospital or two in Persia, he bought largely of Krupp's slaughtering engines!

But we will make no reflections, except to note that the Shah, on leaving the Queen, gave her his "reflexion" (photograph). We cannot help remembering reflections quite as apt, like the one quoted above. Indeed, he hits off other people's reflexions in very artistic style. "At Drulelan (*sic*) Theatre, a young woman of the name of Nielson, a celebrated singer, was sent for to the royal box, and some conversation was held. She was," says the Shah, "very loquacious and shrewd. . . . She makes a large income." The lady could not show more shrewdness than the Eastern monarch himself exhibited in the International Picture Gallery. He saw a fine painting of a donkey, and having asked the price, the director, "a fat, white-bearded man," replied, "a hundred pounds sterling. I remarked," says the Shah, "that the value of a live donkey was at the outside five pounds. How is it, then, that this, which is but the picture of an ass, must be paid so dearly for? 'Because,' said the fat man, 'it is not a source of expense.'" He intimated that it ate nothing. The Shah was equal to the occasion: "True," said he, "it is not a source of outlay, but neither will it carry a load, or give one a ride." He adds, "We laughed heartily;" and not without reason. We can laugh at it still, though the story has been pretty well ventilated.

In France, one of His Majesty's observations is that "the majority of women and men are small made and attenuated of limb." Of the Bourbons, he charmingly says, "They have a claim to the sovereignty of France, up to the point which God may ordain." In an interview with Rothschild, the Shah advised the rich financier to buy a territory in which he could collect all the Jews in the world, of whom the brothers Rothschild should constitute themselves the chiefs. Both the men "laughed heartily." So did the priests at Nôtre Dame, when he asked them if the Most Holy Jesus drank wine; and if He drank it frequently? They lacked sense to see that the Shah's Prophet drank none, but prohibited wine to his followers; who, be it said, absorb a large quantity of Champagne, which they protest is no wine at all.

In Italy the Shah found a King who made no secret that he was far happier as a huntsman than as a King; and in Austria he was deeply touched at seeing the blind King of Hanover. "The Emperor of Germany," he writes, "through his wish to weld all Germany into one State, was under a necessity to take the country of this sovereign

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out of his hands." Convey, the wise call it. The blind ex-king was led by the hand of his wife, the noble queen whom the Prussians so unchivalrously insulted while she remained in Hanover. At Constantinople, the Shah felt himself getting home again; and when he actually reached there, one of his first acts was to print the 'Diary' for Persia, which Mr. Redhouse has translated for the English-speaking people of the world.

After all, it is what the Shah did not see which would have given him the most accurate idea of our morals, manners, customs, and the like. For two or three samples alone is room left. First, there is that institution called "Newgate."

The Shah passed by Newgate, but he saw nothing. He went into the City, and saw no more. Now, within Newgate are the minor rascals, though sometimes a grave criminal is caged and duly suspended. As a rule, however, the most stupendous thieves are on the wrong side of Newgate. Within are, among others, young lads who have committed no other offence than in not departing from the way in which they have been brought up. They were born in a thieving atmosphere—an atmosphere breathed by thieves, rich in thievish influences; they know no harm in thieving; they followed parental and social example; they made war, in a certain way, on society, and were captured in the fight. These poor ignorant creatures must be perplexed in the extreme when the prison chaplain teaches them their catechism, and lays stress upon the passage which commands them to do their duty in that state in which it has pleased God to place them. Without referring to the pleasure, this minor banditti might argue, if they dared argue with a prison chaplain, that *that* was exactly what they had done—namely, their duty according to the circumstances which had made pickers and stealers of them.

Even among the elder offenders there are men to be pitied. They stand with regard to other and greater criminals as the robber did with respect to Alexander. They had helped themselves to a portion of the possessions of another which they thought they wanted. But beyond the robber class there is another. Men of this class most do congregate to the east of the limbo where pettier villains are cloistered up. They stand among honest men, and you cannot distinguish the one from the other. These men grow richer than Crœsus by dint of profitable lying. The Shah would have found them better worth looking at, as curiosities, than bevies of painted ballet girls. How they have the stuff in them to do what they do is matter that Professor Tyndall himself would find hard to deal with. There is the well-known Rayleigh de Testable; he would gravel Darwin to say what line divides him from the beast family. A few years ago Rayleigh was selling peppermint lozenges in a saucepan-lid on the

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steps of a metropolitan bridge; and now, carriages, horses, parks, palaces, ballet ladies, cushioned pews, and universal homage are among the smaller things of his fortune—the mere gold-dust of the golden world in which this Rayleigh de Testable flares away at you, as if he would burn out of your memory the humble facts of the peppermint drops in the saucepan-lid. How these results are brought about by the de Testables I cannot say. Could the Shah have had a dozen of them to dinner, and have been enlightened by his guests, he would very probably have regretted that he had not got them in Persia, where he could have bowstrung them all, to the great relief of society, if not of their victims, who are beyond all help.

As a heathen and an infidel, the Shah, let us hope, had a properly humiliating sense of his inferiority when he sojourned and journeyed in this eminently Christian country. He did not see what might have relieved him of that painful humiliation. He was, indeed, overpowered at Liverpool with the spectacle of its commercial grandeur, its wealth, luxury, and highly respectable appearance. He saw the sights. He did not see the slums. An Englishman might pass with more safety through the wildest part of the Shah's dominions than he can through some of the Liverpool streets. There, it appears, an inoffensive man may be kicked to death for the mere pastime of the kickers, while howling crowds of spectators are ready to stamp the life out of any soft-hearted person who should evince active sympathy for the victim. When we think of the savagery of other large towns, as well as of that (or, let us hope, what *was* that) of Liverpool, we might all shade our faces in shame. The Shah looked on well-dressed crowds giving him holiday greeting, and thought he understood how we had conquered India; he did not see the districts in which men and women have not yet conquered themselves, and who defy all attempts to get over them a wholesome victory.

The first of all virtues is charity; and I cannot help regretting that the Shah was not here when we got that cruel "snap" of fierce winter last December. One of the first wants of the poor was "coals," and one of the first acts of the Christian vendors was to keep those means to warmth from them by raising the price; it was the same with meat and bread. The more the poor needed them, the higher went the cost. The magic words "supply and demand" are made to account for this, but to a simple-minded man who remembers he is in a Christian land, where "Charity" is above "Faith," it is an anomaly which is painful to contemplate.

If the Shah had only tarried here to witness the controversy which has been raging between a Protestant canon and an Ultramontane Monsignor, he would have felt a sort of pity for both those eminent persons. One may fancy how, after listening to the dispute over

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words, Nasr-ed-Din would have quietly asked if the people had not a book of the law to guide them; and if reference to such book, made in sincerity, were not better than being tossed about in controversy. The really faithful are those who refer to the law. Bigots and priests who go beyond their office are the fathers of all infidels.

To conclude, it is a pretty certain thing that the Shah probably knew less of the real condition of England after he left than before he landed on our shores. He came with one idea, which is a comfortable thing enough, but he went away with fifty, antagonistic in their bearing, and that is an unpleasant thing to most men. He travelled under the care that is lavishly taken of royalty. Had he gone in a holiday or excursion train, where there is little or no care at all, and had seen, if not suffered, a smash-up, he would have understood railway management better than he now does. It is just so with England itself. He saw everything under exceptional circumstances, and took the exception for the rule.

We feel bound to say one word in praise of a monarch who came three times the distance that the Shah came to see us, and who not only had eyes but knew how to use them; who chose his own objects of interest; and who cared neither to converse with singing women nor to go on the stage when the curtain was down and smile on ballet-girls. There was no fuss made with him; yet for bearing, intelligence, and excellent purpose, he was worth all the recent visitors of his own dignity. He was not lodged in a royal palace, he and his empress and suite were cribbed, cabined, and confined in an hotel, and neither minded it nor quarrelled with the bill. Opera prices were not quintupled to see the Emperor and Empress of Brazil, yet in singularity the Western strangers were far ahead of the Oriental. The Emperor of Brazil saw everything that had instruction in it. He rose with the sun, and studied life in our streets as the early sons of toil went by to their tasks. He let himself out even before the hall porter of his hotel was up, and was about our squares and streets before a cry of "water-cress" had awoke the echoes. The Emperor once went down to Kew Gardens, visited every corner of them, and was back to breakfast at Claridge's by nine o'clock. Daily he did a day's work before ordinary people had opened their eyes on day at all; and then did another with the daily workers. It was the same in the great manufacturing towns as in London. The Emperor was out for exercise or instruction at the earliest possible hour. He was often an object of intense suspicion to the police. The Caliph Haroun al Raschid himself used to get into difficulties occasionally when he went about his own Bagdad in disguise; but the watchword of Il Bondocani! always rescued the Chief of the Faithful. The Emperor of Brazil was not so protected nor so placed; and till the police, in the different

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towns he visited, came to know who he was, they much wondered what that suspicious stranger was doing abroad at day-break, before honest people had left their beds, or the night police had gone to them. However, he became known—nay, thoroughly respected—and he remains distinguished as the travelling monarch, who worked harder during his sojourn in England than any other sovereign since Peter the Great drove nails into ships, and wheelbarrows through Evelyn's holly hedges down at dirty Deptford.

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Artistic Homes.

"I wish you a great deal of prosperity with a little more taste."
BISHOP, *Gil Blas.*

A SATISFACTORY change has, within the last few years, come over public opinion respecting all things pertaining to decorative art. It is devoutly to be wished that the new ideas be propagated, and that the step in the right direction which has been taken may prove to be but one leading to many others equally commendable. To cease to live in ugly rooms, walk on ugly carpets, look at ugly wall-papers, and have our dinners served on ugly plates and dishes, would be—although we may not feel convinced of it at the first moment, because there is truth in the saying of a heathen writer: "The gods gave us a *fearful* power when they gave us the power of being accustomed to things"—a very great blessing, though a negative one. But to have beauty—positive beauty—in the place of all this ugliness would be a boon indeed. And there are signs, many and hopeful, of the approach of a time in which possibly—nay, probably—this boon will be ours. To this end Sir Charles Eastlake sighs for the "elevation of the standard of taste in our art-schools." The feeling of the general public by this means might be influenced, the national eye might be educated; and thus the capacity for enjoyment, of a kind practically endless and wholly harmless, might be awakened or strengthened in the popular mind. But Ruskin gives us a very discouraging view of taste when he says it is "the instant preferring of one material object to another without any obvious reason, except that it is proper to human nature in its perfection to do so." Now, if the decisions of taste rest on "no obvious reason," they are matters very hard to bring to book. What "human nature in its perfection" is, it would be a question for taste to decide, so that reference to human nature in its perfection would by no means settle any disputed taste question. Such an appeal would be but the first step towards endless "travelling in a circle." The faculty of taste, and the artistic temperament generally, seem to be peculiarly unreasoning; they feel, and do not think. This it is that seems to make what Mr. Gladstone calls "the art-life of this nation" so far off, so all but unattainable. We are told that national art is not a thing that can be framed, glazed, and hung on our walls; that it should be the animating spirit of the forge and the workshop, no less than of the *studio.* Now, to this end, must there not first exist a widely-diffused capacity for perceiving beauty, or, in other words, a national taste? Men can be taught to think rightly by

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weight of argument; but how teach men to *feel* right? how modify their instinctive perceptions? In the attempt to solve this problem many and formidable difficulties will present themselves.

In 'Modern Painters,' Ruskin tells us that "the temper by which right taste is formed is characteristically patient. It dwells upon what is submitted to it. It does not trample upon it, lest it should be pearls, even although it looks like husks. It is a good ground, soft, penetrable, and retentive; it does not send up thorns of unkind thoughts to choke the weak seed; it is hungry and thirsty too, and drinks all the dew that falls on it. It is an honest and a good heart, that shows no too-ready springing before the sun be up, but fails not afterwards; it is distrustful of itself, so as to be ready to believe and try all things, and yet so trustful of itself that it will neither quit what it has tried, nor take anything without trying. And the pleasure which it has in things which it finds true and good is so great that it cannot possibly be led aside by any tricks of fashion or diseases of vanity; it cannot be cramped in its conclusions by partialities and hypocrisies; its visions and its delights are too penetrating, too living, for any whitewashed object or shallow fountain long to endure or supply." And how long, we may ask, will it take to conform the national temper to this pattern? It was, until lately, a received opinion—and one, doubtless, to which many will cling, crying out, "If ignorance be bliss, 'twere folly to be wise!"—that any well-educated lady, in the absence of all special training, must be an oracle in all questions of taste. Refinement of mind, or even of manners, was taken to be a sure guarantee of faultless taste. Much has been done of late towards dispelling this illusion, and decorative art in its relation to our homes is now looked upon as a fit subject for special study, and a field for a new profession.

But if taste cannot, unless with the greatest difficulty, be imparted by teaching, if there be no royal road to the acquisition of "the faculty by which beauty is discerned," there are certain fundamental laws which rule the art of decoration; and some of these laws it may be well to bear in mind at present, when we have begun, as Mr. Gladstone says, "to imbibe the conception that, after all, there is no reason why attempts should not be made to associate beauty with usefulness," but when "the manner of our attempts is too frequently open to the severest criticism. The so-called beauty is administered in portentous doses of ornamentation, sometimes running to actual deformity." Chief among these laws are two:—

I. That whatever is made should, above all things, fulfil the purpose for which it is destined. Thus, a chair shall be verily a thing to be sat upon; stout and sturdy; restful in use, and not very difficult to move from place to place; constructed in such a way as to suggest the use to which it is to be applied; fulfilling the "ends of its being"

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with a straightforward simplicity. Ten years ago, the Windsor, or kitchen chair, was the only one in a fashionable house which, if tried by this standard, would not have been found wanting. The chair which is indeed a chair was certainly not then to be found in the drawing-room, for it is neither the unmeaning lump of padding on castors called an easy chair, nor is it the cane seat on attenuated gilt legs which tilts over with any awkward person. If obliged to introduce a chair into his picture, an artist would certainly have taken the Windsor chair in preference to any specimen of fashionable upholstery; and it is noteworthy that the only "interiors" we have which make at all good subjects for pictures are those which are humble and homely—our kitchens, for instance, and the rooms in farm-houses. It is also instructive to remark that our old furniture remains unpicturesque while it becomes shabby; thus it is evident that antique furniture owes its beauty to something besides its age.

II. That the nature of the material of which the object is composed should be well considered, and suitably treated; or, to use the words of Eastlake, who applies these two laws specially to ornamentation, though they rule construction as well: "Every article of manufacture which is capable of decorative treatment should indicate by its general design the purpose to which it will be applied, and should never be allowed to convey a false notion of that purpose. Experience has shown what particular shapes and special modes of decoration are best suited to certain materials. Therefore, the character, situation, and extent of ornament should depend on the nature of the material employed as well as on the use of the article itself. On the acceptance of these two leading principles—now universally recognised in the field of decorative art—must always depend the merit of good design." If this passage, taken from 'Hints on Household Taste,' should seem trite and obvious, its so seeming must be considered a good sign of the artistic feeling, natural or acquired, of the reader; for it is not very long since these simple laws appeared to those made acquainted with them then for the first time charged with novel and striking wisdom, and by their careful application a flood of light was thrown upon a great number of perplexed taste questions relating to homes and much that they contain.

In accordance with the second of these rules, we may say that it is right to carve wood, but "cut glass" is rejected on æsthetic grounds. "Experience" is in favour of the one, and against the other. To consider only the second: Glass should be dealt with in its molten state; it is, on the face of it, a want of good sense to allow it to harden to the consistency of crystal before giving it shape. Without being extremely sanguine, we may venture to hope that the degree of good taste sufficient to determine the mind in its preference of a Venetian glass jug over a cut-glass decanter is not uncommon amongst us even

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at the present moment. This question of the right treatment of glass is just one of those cases which show that a clear common sense, combined with a little special knowledge—say, of the properties of the material dealt with—go a long way towards supplying the place of right taste in decorative art, where that faculty, as an instinct, is wanting. Those who look at things from the very practical point of view suggested by common sense are apt to fall into the way of considering utility and beauty as one and the same. So long as there is question only of such things as pertain to the rooms we live in, no serious error would perhaps ensue. Much that Ruskin has written on architecture might be cited as lending a certain amount of countenance to the notion that utility—and that of a practical, work-a-day kind, not the Benthamite idea of art-utility, which is realised when æsthetic aspirations are ministered to and gratified—is not only generally coincident with beauty, but identical with it. To strengthen their position, our utilitarians may point to Aristotle, who quotes with approval the ancients, who "pronounced the beautiful to be the good." The "good" and the *useful* would be identical in all things pertaining to decorative art. But the *natural* view is the one which Ruskin takes. He recognises beauty as an attribute wholly distinct from all else, and so sensitive is he to it that it is matter of no small astonishment that, in common with his pre-Raphaelites, he "prefers truth to beauty."

A rule which is but a carrying out of the spirit of those already mentioned prohibits the use of imitations and *shams* of all sorts. Eastlake says he cannot reject silver-gilt articles, marble-veneering, and some other things, on "moral" grounds. Certainly, silver gilding is commonly taken for what it is worth, therefore it can scarcely be called a deceit. However, there is a standard of taste so severe as to condemn that to which the one-time President of the Royal Academy lends a certain countenance. But what shall be said of a style of woodwork which pretends to soundness of construction, and yet is fitted with what may be termed a mask—a simulated structure and mouldings to match, all glued on to a foundation of wood! or of ornaments (?), probably brought from the steam saw-mills in Norway, and nailed on to wood-pannelling in what were meant to be "artistic" rooms in this country? These things are perhaps less obviously bad than the false jewelry and plate, the false lace, "blind" windows, and hosts of textile, and other "imitations" of the vulgar crowd; but they are Dead Sea fruit after all. In the words of Viollet-le-Duc: "Espérons un retour vers ces idées saines, et qu'en fait de mobilier comme en toute chose, on en viendra à comprendre que le goût consiste à paraître ce que l'on est, et non ce que l'on voudrait être." Machine-made ornament is denounced under the last-named rule, when it has the dishonesty to affect to be what it is not—hand-made. But, even if pretending to be nothing more than it is, it is always repulsive to the artistic eye. In ornament we seek two

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things: beauty of design, and beauty of execution. The latter affords more pleasure than the former. It is Ruskin's endeavour, in treating of art, to bring everything to a root in human passion or human hope. Eastlake speaks of the work of hands, as "to the end of all time more interesting than the result of mechanical precision." This manner of looking for the worker, and the worker's effort and ingenuity in his work, so grows on one that after a while any other way of viewing ornament becomes impossible; an artist will take up a specimen of some rude kind of pottery, and, with childlike delight, trace the potter at his work in the rough thumb-marks and deep-scratched lines, wherewith he has heightened the effect of the simple design—a delight not to be found in the uninteresting smoothness of Sèvres china. And so it is with colour in porcelain. The uniformity of tint produced by repeated washings of colour, is not half so interesting as the somewhat uncertain and halting colouring given by the brush, of which every stroke can be traced, and each stroke "tells," though they may not "tell" equally.

"Never hide the construction" is the emphatic charge of our teachers in art matters. Be it a cupboard or a cathedral you are making, let us, above all, see *how* it is made! If the design be sensible and judicious, there is, from that very fact, a pleasure in looking at it; but, even if there be some lack of wisdom in the design, there will be, at any rate, an agreeable candour about the traceable expression of the idea—the plan. To see, for example, in any piece of furniture, how certain means lead to a certain end, makes the object interesting at once. It then becomes a display of skill, an example—great or small—of structural science. To conceal the construction would make it correspondingly insipid and meaningless. The want of meaning, its utter purposelessness, is the besetting sin of that nineteenth-century-type furniture, which is now, let us hope, fast fading out of existence—a type worshipped under the designation of the "pretty;" otherwise, the meretricious; for what word but meretricious describes our "pretty" things—most of them unmitigated shams, and the rest no worse (or better) than "namby-pamby?"

Decorative art is said to be "degraded" when it passes into a direct imitation of natural objects. It would, perhaps, be better to say that pictorial art is "degraded" when applied to purposes of decoration. In any case, pictures used instead of mere decoration are *out of place*, and are, *ipso facto*, condemned. The famous dictum of Lord Palmerston, that "dirt is matter in the wrong place," may be translated into art-talk as, "Ugliness is beauty in the wrong place;" so vital a quality is fitness, or appropriateness, to all that is connected with design. It will be readily granted that, to cut up one's dinner on a picture, into the painting of which the artist had thrown all his heart and mind, would be desecration. An artist who paints on china lately refused to execute

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a costly order because he would not "waste his whole soul" on dessert plates. All honour to him for so refusing! As with pictures, so with sculpture. We do not want, for our decorations, directly imitative carving. Good decorative art treats its subjects conventionally, but much of our wood-carving offends by an over-fidelity to natural forms. Those persons whose bent is distinctly artistic, and whose judgment is not disciplined and toned down to a proper severity, are more prone than others to elaborate ornament, and to deal with decorative much as they would deal with pictorial art. Amongst professed decorators at the present time, the points of difference regard chiefly the kind and quantity of ornament, and the more or less strict adherence to the law against shams.

Besides the large harvest of innocent joy which we shall reap when all the nascent reforms in decoration shall be carried out—when every article of daily use shall delight us by combining in itself "beauty with purpose"—there is another advantage which we may hope to gain, namely, the valuable moral teaching of the honest, artistic objects which will meet our eyes at every turn. Can small and ugly faults of character flourish when surrounded by material beauty, or deceit, in the face of a style of design of which the chief characteristic is a straightforward simplicity? If there be "sermons in stones," may there not also be a certain eloquence in chairs and tables?

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Old Folks and Young.

By the Author of 'Things.'

I think the present generation of old folks understand young folks better than was the case with the latter, when I wore a round jacket and a big hat in the year—well! when Plancus was Consul, and *Harlequin Guy Earl of Warwick and the Dun Cow* was the pantomime at Drury Lane. I have changed sides since then. I am with the old folks now, but that will not influence what I have to say. I know that I would not treat any boy now as that boy's grandfather thought it becoming to treat me in respect of many matters, not affecting morality and discipline, but having a considerable influence upon the happiness of the subject and the formation of his character.

The old folks—*Consule* Plancus—had the strangest ideas as to how the young folks were to be amused. They wanted to amuse them. A slight effort of memory would have drawn from their own youthful sufferings the way not to do it. Nursery tales never die, because you tell your children what pleased you in your childhood. Old toys and games are perpetuated for a like reason. But why my pastors and masters treated me to what they *knew* they hated in their own time, I could never make out. For example, there was the elderly gentleman—intimate friend of the family—who, when you were home for the holidays, thought it pleasant to examine you publicly in the Latin grammar; to inquire if "the master" caned well; and to declare, with an idiotic leer, that he was sure you did not like plum cake. He was as apt as not to select a juvenile party for this inquisition, thoughtless of the effect it might have upon the young lady in book muslin (*ætat* nine) whom you had marked for your own. Then there were the well-intentioned people who invited you to spend the day, and inflicted long hours of torture upon you. You could not decline. "Think of *that!* Oh, how kind of Mrs. A.;" or, "Go and kiss dear Cousin Z. for such a treat!" was the parental commentary, pre-supposing acceptance of the proposals made on your behalf; and there was no appeal. Emperors and kings have come and gone; republics have sprouted and been nipped in the bud; my cares and waistband have increased with the years; I have served Her Majesty in four quarters of the globe; and the snows of—let us say *x* winters' frost may grow, since I had these *treats*. I have forgiven, but will never, *never*, never forget them! Two of them, marked by circumstances of peculiar aggravation, I will narrate. I was invited

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by a lady whose niece was going to marry a relative of my own, and, luncheon over, they took me for what they pretended was a drive in the carriage. That was well enough. But the carriage drew up at Howell and James's, and there it stopped. There I stopped, too—miserable urchin that I was!—perched on a high stool, watching the purchases of silks, laces, and what not, for five weary hours by the clock. Then I was "dropped" at home, and told to thank my kind friends "for such a pleasant day!" Now, if these kind friends had known their business as entertainers of boys, and were obliged to shop, they would have "dropped" me at the Polytechnic Institution (a boy's paradise in those times), with five shillings in my pocket, and *then* what a day I would have had! I should have seen the dissolving views, smelt Professor Bachoffner's delightful chemical smells, got (electrically) tickled all over, and have pelted coppers at the diver when the *Royal George* (of eighteen ounces register tonnage, built in compartments like a cut puzzle, and tied together with string) was blown up in the tank.

When I visited dear Cousin Z.—a maiden lady of mature age, with three fat poodles and a companion—I was immediately regaled with a gingerbread nut and a glass of cowslip wine. *That*, again, was a good beginning. Then, having given satisfactory replies to such questions as—How are papa and mamma, brother and sister? how I liked my school? and whether I was a good boy, and "minded my book"?—I was left to myself, and dear cousin resumed her knitting. Of course, I kicked the rungs of my chair, and was told not to fidget like a dear. My fidgeting was not "like a dear," as this sentence would seem to imply, but I was given to understand that abstinence therefrom would be so regarded. When my restlessness took other forms, I was told I might go and play in the garden. The garden was a parallelogram of soot-coloured earth and mangy grass, twenty yards by twelve, in which one low-spirited lilac tree, which had seen better days, appeared to bewail its solitary lot. Here I was to *play*—at what? There was not a single implement which by the highest ingenuity could be converted into a plaything. The tree was too slight to be climbed. There was no one to speak to. If I could have had out dear cousin's two fat dogs, I might have obtained both amusement and revenge; but their company was denied. They did not like little boys, and might bite me. I began to throw stones at something, but a missile going astray over the wall, this pastime was stopped by a complaint from next door, and probably gave me a bad character with the neighbours. The fairest Capulet did not pray for night more fervently than did I. But night brought no relief to me. Dear cousin was accustomed to have 'Blair's Sermons' read to her by the companion of an evening after dinner, and I was told to "be attentive." This religious exercise, I regret to say, was of little profit

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to me. When I got home, and was asked how I enjoyed myself, I lied. To have told the truth would have implied that I had been naughty. I had not the moral courage to say that dear cousin was a bore, and that I loathed her garden and 'Blair's Sermons.' I trust that this particular instance of mendacity will be debited to those who (indirectly, perhaps, but surely) taught children to say they liked things that they hated, because it would look as though they were "good."

Then the books they gave us! These were not so bad as they had been. Dear old 'Peter Parley' was to the fore; but even he is prosy in comparison to the works the present young folks get. What they would say to the inflictions of the 'Sandford and Merton' school which were put upon *me*, I tremble to think. I should expect to have those once popular (?) volumes shied at my head the next time I called after presentation thereof. There was a dreadful book called the 'Fairchild Family'—a book breathing envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness in every chapter. One of the wretched little Fairchilds did something naughty, I forget exactly what—slapped his sister or something equally vile—and was taken by papa at night to a desolate moor where a murderer was hanging in chains, and had his senses half scared out of him. This literature treated naughtiness with Spartan severity. Nothing short of being tossed by a bull, or drowned in the pond, or getting the scarlet fever, was sufficient to punish naughty Tom; whilst good Henry was invested with qualities which made us burn to punch his sleek head, and besmurch that clean collar, of which such a fuss was made, with his nose blood! Against stuff like this, genial Albert Smith (a rare hand with young folk) wrote those lines, breathing what he called a "milder spirit," such as—

> "Baby sat in the window seat,
> Mary pushed him out in the street;
> Baby fell, and was spiked in the *airey*,
> And mamma *held up her finger* at Mary."

> "Bobby stole a lucifer match,
> And stuck it alight in a farmer's thatch—
> The farmer's house to the ground was brought.
> 'Oh Bob!' said the farmer, '*you didn't ought.*'"

And school? what a change has come over that! Set aside establishments of the Dotheboys Hall type, and I will venture to say that thousands of gentlemen's sons, for whose board and tuition handsome sums were paid in those times, obtained worse treatment and less education than young thieves in a reformatory do now. The starting principle was that a boy was a young wild beast and a lion, and would be worse if he had a chance. In the fiction of the day, we often read of Young Hopeful being sent to school as a punishment. Revolts,

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runnings away, barrings out, and similar results were common. When was the last "barring out," in a large school, I wonder? School—*Consule Planco*—was a jail, in which the big prisoners ill-treated the weak ones, and all were abused by the turnkeys. Boys worked without sympathy and played without encouragement. It was deemed good for them to rough it. Roughing it was to be cold, dirty, and uncomfortable; to have the stomach of a pig and the spirit of a Fantee! Licking was the *panacea*. Learning—that is to say, some Latin and Greek—was to be licked in, and nonsense—by which was generally meant what would fit a boy for his mother's drawing-room—was to be licked out. In my early school days no boy dared own to sisters. Think of that, happy youngsters! for whom pretty girl relatives are, in these better times, a glory and a defence.

In spite of the old *régime*, many boys struggled up, somehow, into useful members of society. Its direct result was the creation (by revulsion) of the mimeny-pimeny *dandy* of the period, who wore tight boots and stays, and thought he had once eaten a pea; (by approbation) of the *neo*-mohawk, who got drunk on beer, wrenched knockers, and beat the police; and (by reaction) of the youth who got the bit between his teeth, knocked over the traces, and went to the bad at full gallop the moment the reins were slacked. This latter was the "good boy" of the story books—he who never came into the house with dirty shoes, or made a noise, or teased the cat. George Barnwell was such a "good boy" once, according to the old, old song:

> "Georgey Barnwell was a very good boy,
> Always a-minding what he was about.
> Never went a-drinking, roving, loving,
> 'Cause why, his Nunky *never let him out*."

Well, he got out at last, Miss Millwood took hold of him, and there was an end of Nunky. I am sorry for Nunky; but if he had treated Master George with a little more outing, the probability is that his disease would have taken a milder form. The present system has its faults; but its "languid swell" is a great improvement upon the old "dandy;" it does not sanction the possession of a museum of door-knockers, bells, and policemen's hats, as part of the furniture of a gentleman's room; and the young man, from the country or town, of the period is not gotten over so easily as in the good old days.

But how about the relative morality? I will admit that some boys catch the vices of men earlier than they used to do, and this is bad; only if they leave them off sooner (as I think they do), and have them milder, the result is not unfavourable in the long run. We worship physical prowess to an absurd degree, and this would create a coarse and violent tone but for the rule that it is not "good form" to get angry and resent anything. I did not intend to moralise when

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I began: I have been led into it; so I apologise, and go back to my text.

The well-meaning old folks who blighted some of the days of my youth with "treats," sinned because they did not know what to do with me, and I dared not act for myself. The young folks are bolder now. If I were a boy again, and were asked to spend the day, as soon as luncheon was nearly over I should help myself to a glass of dry sherry, and say, "Now, my dear Mrs. Z., I am at your service, what shall we do?" To which she would reply, "Well, I must go out shopping, but you can do what you like. We have stalls at the Prince of Wales's, so must dine at six." Or perhaps I should make my own plans thus: "I am going to call on my friend Charley Howell, who lives somewhere near this—capital fellow, Charley! if you've no objection, I'll bring him back to dinner"—and this out of my fifteen-year-old mouth with all the *aplomb* of a colonel in the Guards! Mrs. Z. would be "charmed" to make Charley's acquaintance, and go forth a free woman.

When Mr. Z. comes home, he would no more think of examining Charley and me, or indulging in those old-time inanities about caneing and cake, than he would of putting any young barrister who happened to be his guest through his facings about the rule in Shelley's case by way of amusement. If any reference be made to school, it will be in connection with the Eleven, or the boats. If we go to the theatre—instead of slinking in, a charge and an obstruction to my entertainers, I should give the coachman his orders, offer Mrs. Z. my arm, conduct her to her stall, and wither with a stony stare anyone who presumes to get in our way. I should speak of her thereafter as "a delightful woman," and she of me as a "nice, manly boy." The young folks could not have brought about this change for themselves; the old folks have made it—and they are wise. The Mesdames Z., who encourage boys to be attentive and respectful, who make them feel at home in drawing-rooms, and cultivate in them a taste for the society of good women, do an immense service to society. They make them precocious and conceited? Some of them, perhaps; but never mind. You cannot have everything. Precocity and conceit will get worn off—trust the girls for that!

This reminds me that there are young folks of the feminine gender. I know nothing about them. I never was anything but a boy myself; so have only treated of boys. I should not in the least mind beginning life again as a pretty girl of nineteen, the only child of a rich but well-conducted papa and mamma, with all the modern improvements. But even then I should only see one side of the case, so perhaps I had better leave it alone.

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Ralph Wilton's Weird.

Chapter VI.

The annual entertainment at Brosedale was on an unusual scale this year. The house was full, and full of eligible people. Mr. St. George Wilton, it is true, had departed without laying himself and his diplomatic honours at Miss Saville's feet; but that accomplished young lady was upheld by the consciousness that his soldier-cousin would be there to fill his place, and would be no mean substitute.

This celebration of Sir Peter Fergusson's birthday was instituted by his admiring wife, who found it useful as a sort of rallying point at a difficult season, and helped the family radiance to obliterate the whilom revered Grits of Brosedale; and Sir Peter, to whom money was no object, allowed himself to be flattered and fooled into this piece of popularity-hunting as "advisable" and the "right thing."

Wilton dressed and drove over to Brosedale, in a mingled state of resolution and anxiety. Although he seemed as pleasant a companion, as good a shot, as bold a rider as ever to his Hussar hosts, he found plenty of time to think, to examine, and to torment himself. He had not reached his thirty-fifth year without a sprinkling of love affairs, some of them, especially of early date, fiery enough, but no previous fancy or passion had taken such deep hold upon him as the present one. Like many of the better sort of men, he looked on women as pretty, charming toys, to be kindly and honourably treated, cared for and protected, but chiefly created for man's pleasure, to give a certain grace to his existence when good, and to spoil it when wicked. A woman with convictions, with an individual inner life; a woman he could talk to, as to a friend, apart from her personal attraction; a woman who spoke to him as if love-making was not thought of between them; a woman to whom he dared not make love lest he should lose those delicious glimpses of heart and mind, so fresh, so utterly unconscious of their own charm—this was something quite beyond his experience. Then, to a true gentleman, her strangely forlorn, isolated position hedged her round with a strong though invisible fence; and the great difficulty of meeting her alone, of finding opportunities to win her, and rouse her from her pleasant but provoking ease and friendliness—all conspired to fan the steadily increasing fire. Occupy himself as he might, the sound of her voice was ever in his ear; her soft, earnest, fearless eyes for ever in his sight. What a companion she would be, with her bright intelligence, her quick sympathy, her

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artistic taste!—and through all this attraction of fancy and intelligence ran the electric current of strong passion, the intense longing to read love in her eyes, to feel the clasp of her slender arms, to hold her to his heart, and press his lips to hers! He had known many fairer women, but none before had stirred his deeper, better nature like this friendless, obscure girl, on whom he involuntarily looked with more of reverence than the haughtiest peeress had called forth; and come what might, he would not lose her for lack of boldness to face the possible ills of an unequal match.

Wilton did not deceive himself as to the seeming insanity of such a marriage. He knew what Moncrief would say; what the world in which he lived would say—for that he cared little; but he looked ahead. He knew his means were limited for a man in his position; but there were good appointments in India and elsewhere for military men with administrative capacities and tolerable interest; and with Ella Rivers and plenty of work, home and happiness would exist anywhere, everywhere. Lord St. George! Ay; there lay a difficulty. However, he was certainly a perfectly free agent; but it went sorely against him to resign the prospect of wealth to support the rank which must come to him. Insensibly he had appropriated it in his mind since his interview with the old peer, and now he wished more than ever to secure it for Ella's sake. Whatever might be the obscurity of her origin, she would give new dignity to a coronet, if she would accept him. It was this "if" that lay at the root of the anxiety with which Wilton drove to Brosedale, and struggled to be lively and agreeable while the guests assembled, for he was unusually early. Who could foresee whether that wonderful unconsciousness which characterised Miss Rivers' manner might not be the result of a preoccupied heart? At the idea of a rival—a successful rival—Wilton felt murderous, while smiling and complimenting Miss Saville as they stood together in the music-room, where the first arrivals were received.

"I thought St. George had left some time ago," he said, observing that gentleman approach.

"He returned for the ball," replied Miss Saville, who was looking very handsome in a superb toilette. "He dances divinely. We could not have got on without him."

"Dancing is a diplomatic accomplishment," said Wilton gravely. "I am told there used to be a competition ballet once a year at Whitehall, for which leave was granted at remote missions; but the advantages possessed by the Paris and Vienna *attachés* over those in Vancouver's Land and the Cannibal Islands were so unfair that it has been discontinued; besides, old H—— is opposed to the graces."

This speech permitted St. George to come up, and he immediately engaged the beautiful Helen for the first waltz.

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"I think we may as well begin, Helen," said Lady Fergusson; "we can make up two or three quadrilles. "Come, Lord Ogilvie"—this to a fledgeling lord, who had been caught for the occasion—"take Miss Saville to the ball-room.

"Where is your youngest daughter, Lady Fergusson?" asked Colonel Wilton. "I suppose on such an occasion she is permitted to share the pomps and vanities. Eh?"

"Oh, Isabel! She has already gone into the ball-room with Miss Walker; but I cannot permit you to throw yourself away on a school girl. Let me introduce you to——"

"My dear Lady Fergusson, you must permit me the liberty of choice. Isabel or nothing," he interrupted.

"Very well," said Lady Fergusson, with a slight, but pleased smile.

Colonel Wilton offered his arm, and they proceeded to the ball-room. It was the largest of two large drawing-rooms, only separated by handsome columns. Cleared of furniture and profusely decorated with flowers, it was spacious and attractive enough to satisfy the wildest D——shire imagination, nor was it beneath the approval of the experienced Londoners staying in the house. At one end it opened on a large fragrant conservatory; here the band was stationed; at the further end of the second drawing-room was an apartment devoted to refreshments, and again communicating with the conservatory by a glass-covered passage lined with tropical shrubs, lighted by soft, ground-glass lamps, and warmed to a delicious temperature. When Wilton entered the ball-room the first sets of quadrilles were being formed. He soon perceived Isabel standing beside her stepfather, and Miss Walker, in festive attire, conversing with a learned-looking old gentleman in spectacles at a little distance. Wilton's heart failed him. Where was Ella Rivers? Had Donald insisted on keeping her a prisoner lest she might enjoy a pleasure he could not share?

However, he asked the delighted school-girl to dance with a suitable air of enjoyment, and before the third figure began had extracted the following information.

"Donald has been frightfully cross all day; he always is when we have a ball; and he has kept Miss Rivers so late. But I think she is ready now; she was to wait in the conservatory till Miss Walker went for her, as she could not very well come in alone."

After which communication Miss Isabel Saville found her partner slightly absent, and given rather to spasmodic spurts of conversation than to continuous agreeability. In truth, the quadrille seemed very long. He watched Miss Walker carefully; she was still alone, and—if such a phrase could be applied to anything so rigid—fluttering amiably from one dowager to another among the smaller 'gentry invited once a year.

"Now, Colonel Wilton," said Lady Fergusson when the quadrille

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was over, "I will introduce you to a charming partner—an heiress, a belle ——"

"Do not think of it," he interrupted. "I have almost forgotten how to dance; you had better keep me as a reserve fund for the partnerless and forlorn."

Wilton stepped back to make way for some new arrivals; still, no sign of Ella. Miss Walker was in deep conversation with a stout lady in maroon satin and black lace; she had evidently forgotten her promise; so, slipping through the rapidly-increasing crowd, Wilton executed a bold and skilful flank movement.

Passing behind the prettily ornamented stand occupied by the musicians, just as they struck up a delicious waltz, he plunged into the dimly-lighted recesses of the conservatory in search of the missing girl. She was not there, so he dared to penetrate into the passage before mentioned, on which one or two doors opened; one of them was open, letting in a brilliant light from the room behind, and just upon the threshold stood Ella Rivers, with an expectant look in her eyes. Wilton paused in his approach, so impressed was he by her air of distinction. The delicate white of her neck and arms showed through her dress of black gauze; her dark brown, glossy hair braided back into wide, plaited loops behind her small shell-like ear, and brought round the head in a sort of crown, against which lay her only ornament, a white camelia with its dark green leaves. As she stood thus, still and composed, waiting patiently and looking so purely, softly, colourless, and fair, the quiet grace of her figure, the dusk transparency of her drapery, associated her in Wilton's fancy with the tender beauty of moonlight; but, as the thought passed through his brain, he stepped forward and accosted her.

"I have come to claim the waltz you promised me, Miss Rivers."

She started, and coloured slightly. "Yes," she replied, "I am ready, as you have remembered. I am waiting for Miss Walker, who promised to come for me."

"She is engaged with some people in the ball-room, so I ventured to come in her place."

He bowed, and offered his arm as he spoke with the utmost deference; and Miss Rivers, with one quick, surprised glance, took it in silence.

"You remembered your promise to me?" asked Wilton, as they passed through the conservatory.

"Scarcely," she replied with a slight smile. "I did not think of it till you spoke."

"And had I been a little later I should have found you waltzing with some more fortunate fellow?"

"Yes, very likely, had any one else asked me. You see," apologetically, "I am very fond of dancing, and I know so few—or rather I

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know no one—so had you not come, and I had waited for you, I might never have danced at all."

"But you *knew* I would come," exclaimed Wilton eagerly.

Miss Rivers shook her head, raising her eyes to his with the first approach to anything like coquetry he had ever noticed in her, though playfulness would be the truer description.

"You knew I would come," he repeated.

"Indeed I did not."

These words brought them to the ball-room, and as they stepped out into the light and fragrance of the bright, well-filled, decorated room, Wilton's companion uttered a low exclamation of delight.

"How beautiful! how charming—and the music! Come let us dance, we are losing time. Oh, how long it is since I danced! How glad I am you came for me!"

Wilton tried to look into her eyes, to catch their expression when she uttered these words, but in vain—they were wandering with animated delight over the gay scene and whirling figures, while her hand, half unconsciously, was stretched up to his shoulder. The next moment they were floating away to the strains of one of Strauss's dreamy waltzes.

"And where did you last dance?" asked Wilton, as they paused for breath.

"Oh, at M——, under the great chestnut trees. There was an Austrian band there; and, although such tyrants, they make excellent music, the Austrians. It was so lovely and fresh that evening."

"And who were your partners—Austrian or Italian?"

"Neither. I only danced with Diego—dear, good Diego. Do not speak of it! I want to forget now. I want to enjoy this one evening—just this one."

There was wonderful pathos in her voice and eyes; but Wilton only said, "Then if you are rested, we will go on again." He could not trust himself to say more at that moment.

When the dance was ended, Wilton, anxious to avoid drawing any notice upon his partner, led her at once to Miss Walker, and considerably astonished that lady by asking her for the next quadrille. For several succeeding dances he purposely avoided Ella, while he distributed his attentions with judicious impartiality; although he managed to see that she danced more than once, but never with St. George, who seemed to avoid her.

At last the move to supper was made, and, at the same time, a gay gallop was played, to employ the younger guests, and keep them from crowding upon their elders while in the sacred occupation of eating. Seeing the daughters of the house deeply engaged, Wilton indulged himself in another dance with Ella. When they ceased, the room was well nigh cleared.

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"Now, tell me," said Wilton—his heart beating fast, for he was resolved not to part with his companion until he had told her the passionate love which she had inspired—till he had won her to some avowal, or promise, or explanation—"tell me, have you had nothing all this time? No ice, or wine, or——"

"Yes—an ice; it was very good."

"And you would like another? Come, we are more likely to find it in the refreshment-room than at supper, and be less crowded too; unless your mind is fixed on game-pie and champagne?" While he forced himself to speak lightly, he scarce heard his own spoken words, for listening to the burning sentences forming themselves in his brain, and for planning how to find some blessed opportunity of being alone with the fair girl, whose hand, as it rested on his arm, he could not help pressing to his side.

"No, no," she exclaimed, smiling, "I do not care for game-pie; but I should like an ice."

"Then we will make for the refreshment-room." It was nearly empty, but not quite; one or two couples and a few waiters rendered it anything but a desirable solitude. However, Wilton composed himself as best he could to watch Ella eat her ice, while he solaced himself with a tumbler of champagne. "Who have you been dancing with?" he asked, trying to make her speak and look at him.

"I do not know. One gentleman was introduced to me by Isabel; the other introduced himself. I liked him the best, although he is a soldier"—a laughing glance at Wilton—"and he says he knows you."

"Oh, young Langley of the 15th, I suppose?"

"He dances very badly—much worse than you do."

"That is a very disheartening speech. I thought I rather distinguished myself this evening; but I suppose your friend Diego could distance me considerably."

"You mean he danced better?"—pausing, with a spoonful of ice half way to her lips. "Well, yes; you really dance very well. I enjoyed my dance with you; but Diego! his dancing was superb!"

"Was he not rather old for such capering?"

"Old! Ah, no. Diego never was, never will be old. Poor fellow! You would like Diego, if you knew him."

"You think so?"—very doubtfully—"however, we were not to talk about him. Let me take away your plate. And have you managed to enjoy your evening?"

"Well, no"—looking up to him with wistful eyes—"that is the truth. It is so terribly strange and lonely, I was thinking of stealing away when you asked me for that gallop."

"Let us go and see Donald," exclaimed Wilton, abruptly rising. "His room opens on the other side of the conservatory, does it not?"

"But he is not there; he is gone to bed?"

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"Had he gone when you came away?"

"No; but he was quite worn out with his own crossness, and is, I hope, fast asleep by this time."

"Well, I am under the impression that he is still up."

"Did any one tell you? How very wrong. He ought to be in bed. I shall go and see."

"Yes; you had better. It is half-past twelve. Let me go with you; I may be of some use."

"Come, then," said she, frankly; and Wilton followed her, feeling that he was about to reap the reward of the self-control by which he had won back her confidence, which he feared his unguarded glance had shaken when they had last met.

Ella Rivers walked quickly down the passage leading to the conservatory, now quite deserted, the band having gone to refresh, and crossed to a glass door, through which light still shone. "I do believe he is up. The lamp is still burning." She opened it and stepped in. Wilton followed, dexterously dropping the curtain as he passed through.

"No; he is gone," said Ella, looking round. "I am so glad!"

"So am I," exclaimed Wilton, most sincerely.

"How quiet and comfortable the room looks," continued his companion, drawing off her gloves. "I shall not return to the ball; it is no place for me; so good-night, Colonel Wilton."

"Not yet," he exclaimed, in a low, earnest tone. "Hear me first—I cannot help speaking abruptly—I dare not lose so precious an opportunity." He approached her as he spoke. She was standing by a large writing-table near the fireplace, where the last embers were dying out; she had just laid down her gloves, and, resting one hand upon the table, looked up with a wondering, startled expression. Her total unconsiousness of what was coming struck Wilton dumb for a moment; but he was naturally resolute, and had the advantage of having thoroughly made up his mind. "Although I have done my best to mask my feelings," he resumed, speaking rapidly, but with unmistakable emotion, "fearing to frighten you from the friendly confidence you have hitherto shown me, I cannot hide or suppress them any longer—I must tell you I love you! I must ask if there is a chance for me with you? I know it is audacious to address you thus when I have had so few opportunities of making myself known to you; but the great difficulty of seeing you, your peculiar position, the terrible uncertainty——"

"Oh! hush, hush!" interrupted Ella, who had turned very pale, covering her eyes with one hand and stretching out the other as if to ward off a danger; "do not speak like that! Have I lost my only friend! I did not dream of this—at least I only once feared it, I——"

"Feared," interrupted Wilton in his turn. "Why, am I lost?

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Are you pledged to some other man that you shrink from me? Speak, Ella! If it is so, why I must not force myself upon you. Speak to me! look at me!" And, in his intense anxiety to ascertain the truth, he drew her hand from her face and held it locked in both of his."

"I pledged to any one! no indeed"—raising her eyes, by a sort of determined effort, gravely, earnestly to his. "I never thought of such a thing—no one ever thought of such a thing!" she returned, trying to draw away her hand.

"Then am I utterly unacceptable to you? You cannot form an idea of the intense love you have created, or you would not speak so coldly! Ella, there is no one to care for you as I do—no one to consult—no one to keep you back from me! If you do not care for me now, tell me how I can win you! do not turn away from me! I have much to explain—much to tell you—and I dare not detain you now lest we might be interrupted, but come to-morrow across the brae! I will be there every afternoon by the cairn until you can manage to come, if you will only promise. For God's sake do not refuse to hear me!" He bent over her, longing, yet not daring, to draw her to him.

"Let my hand go," said Ella, in a low voice, and trembling very much. Wilton instantly released it. "Go to meet you! no, I must not—I will not." She stopped, and, pressing her hand against her heart, went on hurriedly—"I can hear no more; I will go away now. Ah, how sorry I am!" She moved towards a door opening into the house, but Wilton intercepted her.

"You misunderstand me, though I cannot see why; but will you at least promise to read what I write? Promise this, and I will not intrude upon you any longer."

"I will," she replied faintly. Wilton bowed and stepped back; the next instant he was alone.

Alone, and most uncomfortable. He had in some mysterious manner offended her. He could understand her being a little startled, but—here one of those sudden intuitions which come like a flash of summer lightning, revealing objects shrouded in the dark of a sultry night, darted across his misty conjectures—he had not mentioned the words "wife" or "marriage." Could she imagine that he was only trifling with her? or worse? The blood mounted to his cheek as the thought struck him; and yet, painful as the idea was, it suggested hope. Her evident grief, her visible shrinking from the word "love," did not look like absolute indifference. She did not like to lose him as a friend, and she feared a possible loss of respect in his adopting the character of her lover. Then she had been so deeply impressed by the caste prejudices of the people around her, to say nothing of the possible impertinences of St. George Wilton, that it was not improbable she

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had cruelly misinterpreted his avowal. These reflections gave him the keenest pain, the most ardent longing to fly to Ella to pour out assurances of the deepest, the warmest esteem, but that was impossible for the present; he had nothing for it but to look up the curtain again, and return to the ball-room, planning a letter to Ella, which should leave no shadow of doubt as to the sincerity and purity of his affection for her.

But the sound of the music, the sight of the dancers, the effort to seem as if nothing had happened, was too much for his self-control, and, excusing himself to his hostess, he was soon driving home, thankful to be out in the cold, fresh night air, which seemed to quiet his pulses and clear his thoughts. Cost him what it might, he would never give Ella up, unless she positively refused him, and of that he would not think. The slight and unsatisfactory taste of open love-making which he had snatched only served to increase the hunger for more. The indescribable, shrinking, despairing tone and gesture with which Ella cried, "Then I have lost you for my friend," was vividly present with him, and before he slept that night, or rather morning, he poured forth on paper all of his love, his aspirations, that could be written. He did not, as letter-writing heroes generally do, sacrifice a hecatomb of note-paper. He knew what he wanted, and said it in good, terse, downright English, stamped with so much earnestness and honesty that it would have been a cold heart, much colder than Ella Rivers', that could have read it unmoved. Then, like a sensible man—for, in spite of the strong love fit upon him, and the rather insane line of conduct he had chosen to adopt, Wilton was a sensible fellow—he set himself to wait patiently till the following day, which might bring him a reply or, possibly, a meeting with Ella herself, which he had most urgently entreated.

He was, however, less composed next day when no letter reached him from Ella, and no Ella appeared at the tryst. The next day was stormy, with heavy showers, and the next was frosty—still no letter; still no Ella—and Wilton began to fret, and champ the bit of imperious circumstance with suppressed fury. If to-morrow brought no better luck he would endure it no longer, but make a bold inroad upon the fortress wherein his love—his proud, delicate darling—was held in durance vile.

The weather was still bright and clear. A light frost lay crisp and sparkling on the short herbage and tufts of broom; the air was so still that the rush of the river, as it chaffed against the big black stones opposing its progress, could be heard at a considerable distance past the cairn, where a path very little frequented branched off to a remote hamlet over the wooded hill behind Glenravon. The low-lying country towards Monkscleugh lay mapped out in the rarefied air, which diminished distance and gave wondrous distinctness to all

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outlines. A delicious winter's day; all sounds mellowed to a sort of metallic music by the peculiar state of the atmosphere. But Wilton was in no mood to enjoy the beauties of nature. He was feverish with impatience as he walked to and fro behind the friendly shelter of the cairn, and noticed, in the odd, mechanical way with which the mind at certain crises seems excited into a species of double action, and, while absorbed by the great motive, can yet take in and imprint indelibly upon its tablets all the minute details of surrounding objects. He saw the picturesque roughness of a prostrate tree; he watched the shadow of the cairn stealing gradually further eastward; he noticed a little robin perching on a twig, that seemed to look at him without apprehension; he gazed at a couple of ragged, miserable goats who were feeding at a little distance, occasionally lifting up their heads to bleat at each other. Years after he could have described the position of these objects, though at the moment he was scarce conscious of them. "Ten minutes to three! If she is not here in ten minutes, I will walk on to Brosedale and find out why," he muttered to himself, as he walked away once more towards the hill. When he turned he saw a slight figure, wrapped in a dark green plaid, standing beside the tree, in the place he had just quitted. Then —impatience, and doubt, and anger all swept away in a flood of delight—he sprang to meet her.

"At last! I thought you would never come. And yet how good of you to grant my request. I have lived two years since I spoke to you."

Ella smiled and coloured, then turned very pale, and gently, but firmly, drew away the hand he had taken, looking on the ground all the time. "I could not come before," she said, in a low, unsteady voice. "To-day Sir Peter has taken Donald with him to D——." A pause. "I am afraid you thought me rude—unkind—but I scarcely understood you. I——" She stopped abruptly.

"Do you understand me now?" asked Wilton gravely, coming close to her, and resting one foot only on the fallen tree, while he bent to look into the sweet, pale face. "Have you read my letter?"

"Yes; many times. It has infinitely astonished me."

"Why?"

"That you should ask so great a stranger to share your life—your name. To be with you always—till death. Is it not unwise, hasty?"

"Many—most people would say so, who were not in love. I cannot reason or argue about it. I only know that I cannot face the idea of life without you. Nor shall anything turn me from my determination to win you, except your own distinct rejection."

"Is it possible you feel all this—and for me?" exclaimed Ella, stepping back and raising her great, deep, blue, wondering eyes to his.

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"I loved you from the hour we first met," said Wilton passionately. "For God's sake! do not speak so coldly. Are you utterly indifferent to me? or have you met some one you can love better?"

"Neither," she replied, still looking earnestly at him. "I never loved any one. I have often thought of loving, and feared it! it is so solemn. But how could I love you? I have always liked to meet you and speak to you, still I scarcely know you; and though to me such things are folly, I know that to you and to your class there seems a great gulf fixed between us—a gulf I never dreamed you would span."

"I do not care what the gulf, what the obstacle," cried Wilton, again possessing himself of her hand; "I only know that no woman was ever before necessary to my existence; high or low, you are my queen! Do not think I should have dared to express my feelings so soon, but for the enormous difficulty of seeing you—of meeting you. Then I feared that you might drift away from me. I am not wanting in pluck; but, by Heaven! I never was in such a fright in my life as the other night when I began to speak to you."

A sweet smile stole round Ella's lips and sparkled in her eyes as he spoke. "Ah, you are not going to be inexorable," he continued, watching with delight this favourable symptom; "if you are heart-whole I do not quite despair."

"Colonel Wilton," she replied, again drawing away her hand, "take care you are not acting on a mere impulse."

"You speak as if I were a thoughtless, inexperienced boy," he interrupted, impatiently. "You forget that I was almost a man when you were born; and as to reflecting, I have never ceased reflecting since I met you. Believe me, I have thought of everything possible and impossible, and the result is you must be my wife, unless you have some insuperable objection.

"Oh, let me speak to you," she exclaimed, clasping her hands imploringly; "speak out all my mind, and do not be offended, or misinterpret me."

"I will listen to every syllable, and stand any amount of lecturing you choose to bestow; but let us walk on towards the hill; you will take cold standing here."

They moved on accordingly, Ella speaking with great, though controlled, animation—sometimes stopping to enforce her words with slight, eloquent gestures. Wilton's heart in his eyes, listening with his whole soul, slowly and meditatively pulling out his long moustaches.

"Nature to nature," continued Ella. "I know I am not so unworthy of you, even if you are all you seem. But are you quite sure you will always see as clearly through the outside of things as you do now? Ah, I have heard and read such sad, terrible stories of change, and vain regret for what was irremediable, that I tremble at the

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thought of what you might bring upon us both. Mind to mind, heart to heart, we are equals; but the accidents of our condition—just look at the difference between them. I am the veriest thistle-down of insignificance. I scarce know who I am myself; and might not the day come when you will regret having sacrificed your future to a fancy, a whim? You might be too generous to say so, but do you think I should not know it? If I married you, I would love you; and if I loved you, there would not be a shadow on your heart, nor a variation in your mood that I should not divine. Do not ask me to love you. I fear it! I am quiet now; my life is not very sunny, but it is free from absolute pain. Be wise."

"I am wise," interrupted Wilton; "most wise in my resolution to let nothing turn me from my purpose; and Ella—for I must speak to you as I think of you—do not suppose I am offering you a very brilliant lot when I implore you to be my wife. I am but indifferently off as a simple gentleman, and will be positively poor when I have higher rank. Still, if you will trust me—if you will love me—life may be very delicious. All that you have said only makes me more eager to call you my own. I am not afraid of changing. I have always been true to my friends—why not to my love? It is true that you must take me somewhat on my own recommendation; but is there no instinctive feeling in your heart that recognises the sincerity of mine? I have listened to all you have said, and simply repeat—Will you be my wife, if you are free to be so?"

"I will answer frankly, yes. Oh, stay, stay! *If* after six months' absence you return and repeat the question——"

"Six months' absence! You are not speaking seriously! Do you think I should consent to such banishment?"

"You must, Colonel Wilton, both for your own sake and mine. I must be sure that the feelings you think so deep will stand some test; you ought to prove your real need of me by absence, by steeping yourself in the society of your own class—the women of your own class. I have a right to ask this."

"By heaven!" cried Wilton, "you are utterly cold and indifferent, or you would not put me to so cruel a proof."

Ella was silent, and tears stood in her eyes, while Wilton went on. "Think of six months!—six months swept clean off the few years of youth and love and happiness we have before us! It is reckless waste! Hear me in turn; give up this purgatory! go back to your friendly landlady. I will meet you in London; in three or four weeks at the farthest we shall be man and wife. I have more than three months' leave unexpired; we will go away to Italy, or the south of France. Ella, I feel half-mad at the idea of such a heaven! Why do you not feel as I do?"

"No, I must not, I will not," said she, turning very pale and

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trembling excessively, but letting him hold her hand in both his. "I must insist upon your submitting to the test of absence, in justice to me."

In vain Wilton implored and almost raged; she was evidently much shaken and disturbed, but still immovable. The utmost Wilton could win was the shortening his time of probation to three months, during which time he was not to write nor expect her to write. If, at the expiration of that period, he claimed her, she would be his. If he changed, he was simply to let the tryst go by unnoticed. The settlement of these preliminaries brought them very near the entrance of the Brosedale plantations, whither Ella had resolutely bent her steps. Finding his eloquence of no avail, Wilton was rather moodily silent.

"You are angry; you think me unkind," said Ella, softly; "but however you decide you will yet thank me."

"You do not feel as I do."

"Perhaps not; yet do not think that it costs me nothing to say good-bye. You always cheered me. I used to look for you when I came out to walk, and when you used to come and see Donald, I always felt less alone."

"If you feel all this, why do you banish me?"

"Because it is wisest and kindest; and now good-bye. Yes; do go! I want to be back in time to grow composed and quiet before Donald returns."

"Dearest, you look awfully pale. I ought not to keep you; and yet I cannot part with you." He drew her to him most tenderly, irresistibly impelled to breathe his adieu on her lips.

"No, no," she exclaimed, drawing back. "I dare not kiss you! a kiss to me would be a marriage bond: do not ask it; do not hold me." He felt how she trembled, and he released her.

"One day, Ella, you will perhaps know how much I must love to obey you. So it must be good-bye?"

"Yes; and remember you leave me perfectly free. If you do not return, I shall rather rejoice that we have escaped a great mistake—a terrible sorrow—but if you do come back——" A soft blush stole over her cheek—a bright smile. Wilton gazed at her, waiting eagerly for the next words, but they did not come. "Whatever happens," she resumed, "I shall always remember with pleasure, with respect, that you rose above the conventional gentleman into a natural, true man." She gave him her hand for a moment, then, drawing it away from his passionate kisses, disappeared in the fast-increasing gloom of evening among the plantations.

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Chapter VII.

A bright, blustering March morning was shining with a cold glitter over the square of the well-known B—— Barracks, in that pleasant, racketty capital, Dublin, nearly three months after the interview last recorded. Parade had just been dismissed, and the officers of the 2nd battalion —th Rifles had dispersed to their various occupations or engagements, with the exception of a small group which gathered round an attractive fire in the mess-room, and discussed the military and club gossip of the hour.

"Will you stay for the —th Dragoons' ball, on Thursday, Wilton?" said one of the younger men to our friend, who was reading a London paper, and dressed in muftis, evidently a guest.

"And for St. Paddy's on the 17th?" asked the Colonel. "It's a dazzling scene, and no end of fun."

"I promised to dine with the mess of the —th Dragoons to-night," returned Wilton; "and I think I should like to see their ball; but I must be in Scotland before the 17th, so must forego the humours of St. Patrick's. I see, Colonel, my battalion was not to embark until the 25th of February. They cannot reach England for another month. I have a great mind to exchange into the regiment that is gone out to relieve them. I do not like soldiering in England—there is always work to be done in India."

The Colonel elevated his brows. "My dear fellow, you are desperately energetic. I should have thought that, with your prospects, you had done work enough."

"My prospects have nothing to do with it. I suppose there would be no difficulty in the matter?" continued Wilton, reflectively, more to himself than to his listener.

"Difficulty! none whatever. The fighting is over, so no one will be afraid to stay at home; and I fancy there is a very uncomfortable transition state before the Anglo-Indian world."

"I shall ask for extension of leave; I don't fancy joining the depôt. How long is Moncrief to be away?"

"He has three weeks' leave—urgent private affairs. I am sure to see him in town, though I shall only pass through," remarked Wilton, and relapsed into silence, scarcely hearing the arguments of his companion, who proved to demonstration that Wilton would be a fool to make any exchange, except, indeed, he could get a chance of returning to his old friends of the 2nd battalion.

Ralph Wilton was looking thinner and graver than formerly, and there was an expression of anxiety and irritation in his keen, bold eyes. While the Colonel argued, an orderly approached with letters, which his officer took, and, glancing at the addresses, handed two or three to Wilton. "This is from Moncrief," said he, opening an

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envelope directed in a remarkably stiff, legible hand—"forwarded from Athgarvan. He is annoyed at missing me, and——" Here he stopped, and read on, with knit brows and fixed attention—then let the hand which held the letter drop, and stood wrapped in thought.

"No bad news?" asked the Colonel.

"Yes—no," he returned, absently. "My dear Colonel, I must leave you to-day. I must go up to town by this evening's mail."

"This is very sudden. Can't you manage a day or two more? Why, you have only been three weeks with us."

A few words from Wilton convinced his friend and host that, although indisposed to give a reason for his sudden move, its necessity was imperative.

The passage in Major Moncrief's letter, which had moved Wilton, was as follows:—

"Town is very full; the club brimming over; dinners going a-begging—and talking of dinners, I met our Monksclough acquaintance, Lady Fergusson, in Regent Street, yesterday. She was in deep mourning; it seems that unfortunate son and heir died about a month ago. Sir Peter is in great grief; the establishment at Brosedale broken up, and the whole family *en route* for Germany. I wonder what has become of the pretty lassie you picked up in the snow! I was always afraid of your getting into some mess with her; but you have more sense than I gave you credit for."

The Brosedale establishment broken up, and not a line—not a word—from Ella. Where had she gone? Did she wish to avoid him? In four days more the three months' absence prescribed by Ella would have expired, and now he was thrown off the scent. Had she sought and found any new employment? If in her heart she distrusted his constancy as much as he professed, she might have done so; or had she returned to that London landlady, whom she had described on the memorable occasion of the snowstorm. Hold! he had noted the address somewhere. This led to a vehement search among his papers and memoranda; but in vain. Then he sat down and thought intensely. Kershaw?—yes, that was the name of the woman; and Gothic Villa, the name of the house at Kensington; but the street, that he could not recall; nevertheless, he would not leave a corner of the "old court suburb" unexplored. With this resolution he started on his journey; the mere movement raised his spirits and invigorated him; anything was better than the silence and endurance of the last three months.

He had parted with Ella Rivers in a mood curiously compounded of love, anger, slightly mortified vanity, but deep admiration. He felt that she had a right to demand some test of a passion so sudden; and without words, her grave candour had impressed upon him the conviction that in asking her to share his life, he asked quite as much

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as he offered—a conviction not always clear to men, even when in love. Then the respect which her self-control, her noble simplicity, imposed upon him, deepened and elevated the character of his affection. Above all, she was still to be won. She had allowed him to hope; but he dared not flatter himself that she loved him—and how wonderfully he yearned for her love; he was astonished at it himself. All life seemed empty and colourless without her. About three weeks after he had left Glenravon, he had written to let her know that he had accepted an invitation to Ireland, where he intended to make some stay and visit his former brother officers; seizing gladly the excuse afforded by this change of locality; but he had quickly received the following reply:—

"You must faithfully keep the promise you have given. Do not, in any way, seek me for three or four months—meantime, I am well, and not unhappy. Whether we meet again or not, I shall ever think of you kindly. May the good God guide us to what is happiest and best for both.

"Always your friend,

"ELLA RIVERS."

The small, straight, firm writing was kissed again and again, even while he chaffed against her firmness. This touch of the true magnet had drawn all the atoms of romance, of nobility, of perception of spiritual and intellectual life, which lay scattered, not sparingly, among the coarser material of the man, into symmetrical circles converging to one centre. He was softened and strengthened. He resolved to obey Ella to the letter; and his brother officers noticed that Wilton was much more ready for balls and dinners and luncheon parties than formerly; for his character had been rather that of a "reserved, quiet fellow, with a devil of a temper when roused." He was, nevertheless, a favourite, as straightforward, plucky men, who never "shirk their fences" in any sense, generally are. The neighbourhood, too, where Wilton's visit was made, was unusually wealthy and aristocratic, for Ireland, so that he had ample opportunities for "steeping" himself in the society of people of his own class. The result, however, was that the impression he had received sank deeper and more abidingly as time went on. And now, when this fresh difficulty arose, he sprang forward upon the search with all the eagerness of a sleuth-hound suddenly released from his chain.

It was in the dim grey of a cold, drizzling morning, that Wilton reached Morley's Hotel. After a bath and breakfast, he sallied forth in search of Moncrief. During his long night journey he had taken counsel with himself as to how he should proceed. He would learn Lady Fergusson's present address, and endeavour to ascertain from her what had become of Ella. How he was to accomplish this without

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rousing her ladyship's suspicions, he would leave to the inspiration of the moment; for it was no part of his scheme to unmask his movements until he could really fix his plans. This could not be done till he had seen Ella, and received a renewal of her promise; or—terrible alternative—been rejected and overthrown! Her unaccountable silence was cruel, unfeeling, and a clear breach of faith. Why had she not written to announce so material a change of circumstances? Had any of the pestilent political crew, that used to surround her father, started up to exercise an evil influence? The idea fired him with indignation. He had so delighted in thinking of her as his alone—a hidden jewel, the lustre, and value, and beauty of which were for him only! Meditating thus, he reached the frugal Major's lodgings, as he did not wish at present to confront the publicity of a club. But his friend had not yet emerged from the privacy of his chamber, and there was only a dingy back parlour, a sort of general waiting-room, into which he could be shown. Wilton, therefore, wrote hastily on his card, "What is Lady Fergusson's address in town?" and sent it up to Moncrief; receiving it back again in a few minutes, with this inscription on the reverse, "Claridge's; but I think they are gone. Dine with me to-day at the club—7 sharp."

Leaving word that he could not dine with Major Moncrief, Wilton left the house in a state of irritability and depression, and bent his steps to Claridge's; early as it was, he might at least make inquiries there. A yawning porter, who was sweeping the hall, called a waiter, who informed him that "Sir Peter and Lady Fergusson, the Misses Saville and suite," had started for Paris the day before. "And suite!" echoed Wilton; "I suppose that included the governess?"

"Yes, sir; there was a lady as went with the youngest young lady in one of the hotel broughams; she was the governess."

"Was she a tall, thin lady, with spectacles?"

"Just so, sir."

"No other lady was with them?"

"No, sir; none."

Nothing more to be learned there! He was quite afloat. No clue to the girl whom he had hoped would be, two days hence, his affianced bride, beyond the vague address, "Mrs. Kershaw, Gothic Villa, Kensington." He made his way slowly into Piccadilly and hailed a Hansom. Kensington must be the scene of his research, and the sooner he plunged into it the better.

How to begin occupied his thoughts as he bowled along. Shops, police, and postmen seemed the most likely sources of information; failing these, he must manage to communicate with Miss Walker, who would certainly know Ella's whereabouts. However, he had great faith in himself; it was not the first time he had to hunt up a faint track, though the difficulties were of a far different nature.

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"Here we are. Where to now, sir?" cried Cabby, through the hole at the top.

"Oh,—a—the nearest butcher's," said Wilton. "Bread and meat and tea," he reflected, "the humblest landlady must require;" and, proud of his own reasoning powers, he dismissed the cab, never remembering—probably not knowing—the ready-money system which, paying the amount and carrying off the article, "leaves not a wrack behind."

The important and substantial butcher, struck by the lordly bearing of his interrogator, condescended to repeat the words "Gothic Villa" in several keys, as though the reiteration would evoke knowledge, but ended with, "Can't say I know any such place, sir. Here, Smith"—to a blue-gowned assistant, with rolled up sleeves, who was adding "one leg more" to an artistically-arranged fringe of legs of mutton which adorned the cornice—"do you know anything of 'Mrs. Kershaw, Gothic Villa?'"

"Kershaw," replied the man, pausing; "I seems as if I do, and yet I don't."

At this maddening reply, Wilton felt disposed to collar him and rouse his memory by a sound shaking. "The person I want lets lodgings; and is, I think, elderly."

"No, I don't," repeated the butcher's assistant. "I know Gothic 'All."

"Ay," struck in the master, "and Gothic 'ouse, and Gothic Lodge, but no willar. I know the place well, sir, and I don't think there is a Gothic Willar in it. P'raps its lodge, not willar, you are looking for?"

"Then who lives at these other Gothics?"

"Oh, Mr. Reynolds, the great ironmonger, has the 'all; and the honourable Mrs. Croker lives at the lodge."

"Well, neither of these names can possibly be converted into Kershaw. I am sorry I troubled you."

"No trouble at all, sir."

Patiently, though anxiously, Wilton went from butcher to baker, from baker to butterman, from butterman to milkshop, until he suddenly exclaimed at his own stupidity, as his eye was caught by a conspicuous brass plate bearing the inscription, "Mr. Mayers, Gas Inspector." "By Jove," cried Wilton aloud, "that is the fellow to know every house in the parish. Why did I not think of a gas inspector before?"

He rang, and a smart young woman appeared at the door in a few moments.

In his uncertainty whether he was speaking to the wife or the handmaid of Mayers, Wilton politely raised his hat, and asked if he could see the master of the house.

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"I am very sorry, sir, he is out, and will not be here till tea-time."

"And when will that be?" asked the anxious querist, smiling blandly.

"Oh, not till half-past five, sir." "Could I give any message?" replied the lady, much impressed by the grand air and chivalrous courtesy of her interlocutor.

"I am afraid I must trouble Mr. Mayers myself. I shall not detain him beyond a moment or two, if he will be so good as to see me about half-past five?"

"Yes, sir; he will be in then, and very happy to see you."

"Perhaps you happen to know where Gothic Villa is in this neighbourhood? I am looking for a Mrs. Kershaw, Gothic Villa."

"Kershaw? Gothic Villa? No, indeed, I do not. I have very few acquaintances here; you see people are rather mixed in Kensington."

"I will not keep you standing—at five-thirty, then," returned Wilton, raising his hat, and smiling as he said to himself, "Madame, the gas inspectress, is exclusive. Such caricatures ought to cure the follies they travestie." He looked at his watch: "Two hours and a half to spare. What should he do? Make any further search, or rely on the gas inspector? Yes; he would be sure to know." So after a a moment's thought, he again called a Hansom, and rattled back to the club, but Major Moncrief was not there. Hastily scribbling an invitation to breakfast next day, he went on to his hotel, to snatch a mouthful of luncheon or dinner, or both, for he still hoped to spend the remainder of the evening exchanging vows, explanations—perhaps kisses—with Ella Rivers. He had by some unreasonable process of thought convinced himself that she could have taken refuge in no other haven than the somewhat unromantic dwelling of Mrs. Kershaw.

As the half-hour struck, Wilton rang again at the gas inspector's house. He was received by the same lady most graciously, and ushered into an oppressively smart front parlour, profusely decorated with antimacassors, and mats, and table-covers.

"Mr. Mayer will be here directly; he has only just come in. What a disagreeable day it has been—drizzle, drizzle, the whole time; I couldn't venture out," simpered Mrs. Mayers, who was disposed to improve the occasion by a little conversation with her "stylish visitor," as she described him to her husband. Wilton assented rather absently; and then, to his great relief, Mr. Mayers came in. After a few words of apology, Wilton put the oft-repeated question.

"Kershaw, Gothic Villa?" repeated Mr. Mayers, meditating. "Yes, of course, I know well nigh every house; and it so happened I was at Mrs. Kershaw's a week or ten days back. Why, it is in H—— Street, not far from Holland Park. You must turn right from this, then first to your right, and third to the left. Gothic Villa is down the end of the street, opposite a dead wall."

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With many thanks and apologies, Wilton bowed himself out, and walked away rapidly, his heart beating high at the idea of the meeting so near at hand.

Gothic Villa was not a lively residence; and, what was worse, it looked untidy. The box borders looked as if lately tredden down in patches; the bell was broken, and the gate hung awry, refusing, after the fashion of crooked things, to do one thing or the other—to open wide or shut close. Wilton felt unutterably shocked at the melancholy, sordid aspect of the place. The bell being broken, he felt at a loss how to summon the garrison, but while he hesitated, two little girls, in short frocks, dingy stockings, and battered hats, came up bowling their hoops, and began rattling their hoop-sticks noisily against the railings, whereupon the front door was flung suddenly wide open, and a grimy servant began to shout some objurgation to the juveniles.

"Pray, does Mrs. Kershaw live here?" asked Wilton, advancing to the door.

"No; there's no such name here."

For a moment Wilton felt annihilated.

"She used to live here?"

"P'raps so; we've not been here above a week, and I wish we was out of it."

"And do you know where Mrs. Kershaw is gone?"

"No, that I don't."

After a little talking, she suggested that "missus" might know; but that potentate, on being appealed to, confessed ignorance, stating, however, that "master" might know; but "master" was absent, and would not be back till to-morrow morning. More Wilton could not extract; and he most reluctantly left the long-sought villa, informing the inmates that he would call next day, hoping that "master" might be able to supply the desired information.

Still, with unshaken perseverance, Wilton lingered about. He stopped the postman, but he had no letter, since the new people moved in, for Mrs. Kershaw. She had very few letters at any time—still she had some. There was another postman that took the noonday delivery; he might know. When did he go round? Oh, from twelve to twelve-thirty. He might know, and he mightn't. Addresses were not given to the letter-carriers, but left at the district office.

"Ah, then, I may probably find this Mrs. Kershaw's whereabouts at the post-office?"

"No, no, sir," said the man; "they won't give you no addresses at the office, and the letters is sent on to the district where the party has moved; so it's a chance if any of us knows."

"At any rate, I shall be here to-morrow to meet the twelve o'clock man; meantime I am obliged to you."

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So saying, Wilton deposited a judicious tip in the carrier's willing hand, and made for the main road, hoping that a favourable report of him would be given to the other carrier, and predispose him to be communicative.

It was long before Wilton forgot the oppressive monotony of that evening. He could not bring himself to seek out Moncrief. He would have him at breakfast, and that was bad enough. He strolled into the Adelphi, and felt savage at the pathos of the play, and the fun of the afterpiece. He left before it was finished, and returned to the coffee-room. He tried to sketch out an advertisement addressed to Mrs. Kershaw, but intended for Ella. He vexed himself with all kinds of conjectures, and finally retired, hoping for oblivion in sleep, which did not come for some weary hours, and his last waking thought was that to-morrow would be the nineteenth of March, the day of the tryst, which he had so often pictured to himself. And here he was in total ignorance of Ella's dwelling—not a step nearer to the desired interview. The following day was not much brighter than the one just described, and Wilton rose with an unspeakable loathing for breakfast and Moncrief—especially Moncrief.

However, both had to be endured. The Major was considerably puzzled by his entertainer's pre-occupation and testiness. Every subject seemed distasteful—every person more or less offensive.

"What's come to you, lad?" asked the old soldier. "Are you in debt again? I thought you had left that class of troubles behind you; and you seem to have been quiet and steady enough of late."

"No; I am not in debt."

"Well, I do not think you are in love; and love or money is at the bottom of most troubles—eh?"

An inaudible muttering was the only reply.

"A —— idiot?" repeated the Major, thinking he caught the sound. "No, by no means. I never said so, though there have been times when I was afraid you would act like one. Have you seen the Viscount?"

"No."

"I suppose you are going to call on him?"

"No, I am not."

"Then you are rather an idiot. Why will you throw away fortune?"

"I am not throwing it away. He is out of town."

"Why don't you go and pay him a visit?"

"I cannot; he has not asked me."

"Not asked you—bosh! ——"

"Moncrief," interrupted Wilton, "will you take some more kidney, or ham, or coffee, or anything?"

"No, thank you; I have breakfasted well!"

"Then go, will you? like a good fellow. You are partly right.

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I am in a pickle. You shall know all about it one of these days, but I cannot tell you just now. I have an appointment at—that is, I must be at Kensington at twelve."

"At twelve! Bless my soul, man, it is scarcely half-past ten now."

Chapter VIII.

The afternoon of the same day was lowering, bleak, and drear, as a young girl, in a long black dress fitting close to her slight figure, and relieved at throat and wrists by a plaiting of white crape, entered a small sitting-room at the back of one of a row of brand new residences in the cardboard, Tudor style, inlaid with coloured bricks, and further relieved by oriel windows.

The young lady carried a cup full of violets, and set it upon a table which had been moved into the window. It was crowded with materials for water-colour drawing. A very graceful design suited to a portfolio lay partly coloured where the light fell strongest.

The young lady, or rather Ella Rivers, stood looking at her work for a few minutes, and then sitting down, with a deep sigh, took up her brush, first bending lovingly over the violets until her face touched them.

She was exceedingly pale—the pallor of thought and sorrow. Her eyes, which looked larger than they used—perhaps because she had grown thinner—had a weary, wistful expression, which gave pathos to the quiet sadness of her face and figure. The last month had tried her sorely. The sudden, fatal illness of Donald had caused her immense bodily fatigue and real sorrow. She had grown to love the afflicted, wayward boy, even more than she knew; and he could not bear her out of his sight, finally breathing his last in her arms. Then, not understanding the terms which existed between Wilton and the Fergusson family, Ella never doubted that he was aware from the first of poor Sir Peter's bereavement and the consequent removal of the family. His silence under such circumstances, the absence of any attempt to seek her out was, to her, conclusive evidence that his sudden, violent affection for herself had passed away. Arriving at this conviction showed her how fondly, although unconsciously, she had hoped for his constancy. When Wilton astonished and agitated her by his unexpected avowal, she had most truly told him that she did not love him, that his truth or constancy was not essential to her happiness. His frank kindness, and the interest he had shown in her art and her conversation, had touched and diverted her. Feeling keenly the insurmountable barrier of caste, which her reason scornfully resented, the possibility of a man of his grade being her lover never crossed her mind. Moreover, the habits of her life accustomed

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her to men as companions, as friends, almost as playfellows, but never as lovers. Wilton was, therefore, to her at first an agreeable, intelligent, though mistaken man, blinded to the great truths of his age by his position and his profession, but who, under higher direction, might have been worthy the friendship of her father, Diego, and the rest of the exalted society who passed their lives propagating theories of political perfection and escaping the police.

After the wonderful interview by the cairn, where he had shown that, although past the boy-lover period, he was ready to cast all consideration for rank and riches to the winds for her sake, she had estimated him very differently. From his first words of love she shrunk with an agony she could not express, so certain was she that they must mean insult; but when his letter told her the depth and sincerity of his affection, and she listened to the magic of his earnest pleading, she felt bewildered and almost frightened at the ardour of the feeling she had evoked. She could not quite believe him. She trembled at the idea of his hurrying into the irrevocable, which he might afterwards regret; and the more she felt her heart inclined to yield, the more resolutely she held to her determination, for both their sakes, to test the reality of his affection.

But when he was gone, when she was left alone with the memory of his persuasive voice—of his bold, brown eyes, softened into tenderness—of the passion which glowed through the earnest respect of his manner—whatever of indifference she had felt or assumed in their interview fast faded away, or rather warmed into real interest, and trembling, half-fearful liking. Then the question of his constancy assumed an absorbing importance. The perpetual struggle in her mind to resist the delightful suggestions of hope kept the subject constantly before her; and the bitterest trial she had ever known was the gradual fading away of the hopes that had formed themselves in spite of her, when week after week slipped past and no tidings reached her from Ralph Wilton. Of course he knew that she must leave Brosedale, and must also know that under no circumstances would she take the first step towards the renewal of their intercourse.

Working round this dreary circle of thought, she sat motionless, pencil in hand, too absorbed to notice the entrance of a woman of a certain age, who by her costume evidently aimed at the higher appellation of a lady. She wore a handsome plum-coloured silk, a tint which appears to be the especial favourite of publicans' wives and aspiring landladies. Her head—a high, narrow, self-asserting sort of head—was perched on a long, thin neck, and adorned with a scanty screw of hair on the top, secured by a high tortoise-shell comb, while the front tresses were disposed in short, wiry ringlets, painfully suggestive of steel springs, and carefully regulated by ancient contrivances

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called side-combs. These locks vibrated when she moved; and as her walk was a succession of jerky sinkings and risings, the ringlets had an active time of it. Her features were regular and good, but somewhat neutralised by a faint expression of constantly turning up her nose, which was anything but *retroussé*, as if in contemptuous indignation at the futile efforts of the world in general to take her in. This personage paused as she was half across the little room, and looked very sharply at its occupant's profile, which was turned to her.

"Any ways, you ain't breaking your heart with hard work," she exclaimed, in a tone which would have been painfully acute but for a slight indistinctness caused by a melancholy gap where pearly front teeth ought to have been.

Ella started at her voice, and a large tear, which sometimes unknown to her had hung upon her eye-lashes, fell upon the edge of her paper. She looked at it dismayed; half-an-inch nearer, and it would have played havoc with her colours. She hastily placed her handkerchief on the fatal spot, and, turning towards the speaker, said absently, "Working! Yes, Mrs. Kershaw; I am succeeding tolerably with this design; I am quite interested in it."

"And that is the reason you are crying over it—eh?"

"Crying! Oh, no,"—smiling a little sadly, "I am not crying."

"Something very like it, then," said Mrs. Kershaw, advancing to the table and looking critically at Ella's work.

"It's a queer thing," she remarked, with high-toned candour." "What is it for?"

"Oh, the cover of a book; or—the back of a portfolio."

"Well, I suppose it's my ignorance; but I can't see the beauty of it. Why, there's dozens and dozens of things just like that ready printed in all the shops; and you don't suppose hand work can hold its own with machine work. Why don't you paint a house, and a tree, and cow—something sensible-like—that would set off a nice handsome frame? I wouldn't mind buying such a picture myself; my first floor is a trifle naked for want of pictures."

"Oh, Mrs. Kershaw," exclaimed Ella, smiling, this time more brightly, for she was amused at her friend's notions of art; "I assure you an original design is not to be despised. If I can but find favour with——"

"Ay, that's just it. It would take a heap of bits of pictures to make a living. I must say I think you was a fool not to look out for something steady, right off, when the ladies as could have recommended you was here; this will be hard work and poor work."

"Nevertheless, I am determined to try it," said Ella, firmly, though sadly. "You cannot tell the imprisonment a great house is to me; besides, you forget poor Sir Peter Fergusson's generosity. I can

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afford to board with you for six or eight months, and then if all my efforts to earn my bread by my art fail, I can still ask Miss Walker's help. I am not in your way, good friend, am I?"

"Well, no. I am not that selfish, like many as would try to keep you here, when it would be better for you to be away; but you are not like other girls, the place is different when you are in it; and the trifle you pay is more than the trifle difference you make. It was about yourself—what is best for you—I was thinking."

"Do not think of me," returned Ella, placing her elbow on the table and resting her head on her hand despondently; "I am so weary of myself."

"Now there is something come to you quite different from what used to be. And you are that pale and thin, and don't eat nothing. There's some of those grandedees" (such was Mrs. Kershaw's pronunciation) "been talking nonsense, and you have been and gone and been fool enough to heed them, in spite of all the talking-to I gave you before you went to Sir Peter's. They are all alike. If you was a h'angel, with a wing sprouting out of each shoulder, and as beautiful as—as anythink, the poorest scrap of agent leman amongst them, that hadn't as much gumption as would earn a crust costermongering, would laugh at the notion of putting a ring on your finger. No, no; as much love as you like without that. I knows 'em, the proud, upsetting, lazy lot, I do;" and Mrs. Kershaw stopped with a jerk, more for want of breath than lack of matter.

"You need not distress yourself," returned Ella, with a smile of quiet scorn. "No one insulted me at Brosedale; and I *did* keep your good advice in mind. I am depressed, nor can you wonder at it, when you think of the sad scenes I went through with poor Donald."

"Well, well, anyhow you won' open your mind to me, though I fancy I am your best friend, and your only friend into the bargain, though I say it as shouldn't," retorted Mrs. Kershaw with some asperity.

"You are, indeed," said Ella, sweetly. "So instead of quarrelling with me for not telling you a romantic tale, tell me some of your own affairs; any one about the rooms yet?"

"I believe," said Mrs. Kershaw, a shade less severely—"I believe I'm let." This startling announcement did not in the least move Miss Rivers from her gravity; she merely observed, sympathetically, "I am very glad."

"This morning when you was out a lady and gentleman called and looked at the rooms and made rather a stiff bargain. They said they would call again; but the gentleman gave me his card, and that looked like business."

"I suppose so. I went over to Kensington this morning to see

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the postman. I thought it was as well to tell him our new address, in case there might be a letter for me."

"A letter for you," repeated Mrs. Kershaw, in a sharp key, with a sudden nod that set her ringlets dancing. "I thought Miss Walker knew we was moved."

"She does; still it is possible some old friend——"

"h'oh!" said Mrs. Kershaw, ironically. "Are you sure it ain't a new friend—a Scotch friend? I know I havn't no right to ask, but——"

"Ah, suspicious one," interrupted Ella, laughing. "If none of my father's old friends seek me out, no one else will."

"There's the front door bell," cried Mrs. Kershaw, excitedly; "that's the lady and gent come back about my first floor"—a pause ensued, a rapid but heavy tread, and the opening of the door was heard. The next moment that of the room in which they were was flung violently open, and the "girl" announced a "gentleman for Miss Rivers." Whereupon a tall figure seemed to fill up the doorway, and for a moment Ella felt dizzy and blinded with astonishment, with mingled joy and terror, as Colonel Wilton entered and stood still.

"h'oh," said Mrs. Kershaw; "do you know this gentleman, or is he after the apartments?"

"I know him. I——" faltered Ella.

"h'oh," again said Mrs. Kershaw, and, turning her back, walked straight out of the room with dignity. Wilton closed the door after her; and, advancing to the agitated girl, exclaimed, with a tinge of sternness, "Ella, have you hid from me purposely?"

"Hid from you? No; you knew where to find me when poor Donald died."

"Which I first heard of in Ireland two days ago."

"Two days ago," faltered Ella, the truth dawning on her. "I thought you would have known of it directly. I thought you did not write because you did not wish to see me again. I—oh, listen to me, understand me!" clasping her hands with a restrained eagerness very impressive. "Do not think I would willingly have caused you the slightest uneasiness from any petty idea of standing on my own dignity; but, indeed, I was puzzled what to do, and then believing, as I did, that you must have been informed of Donald's death and the breaking up of Sir Peter's establishment, I concluded that you had changed your plans—your views—your—oh, I could not write to you! Do you not see I could not?"

"I can only repeat that two days ago I did not know of that poor boy's death. And but for a few words in a letter from Moncrief, I should have started for Monkscleugh to keep the tryst. Now, Ella, are you glad to see me? do you believe me?" As he spoke, Wilton took

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both her hands, and looked eagerly into the eyes so frankly, but gravely, raised to his.

"I do believe you," said Ella, trying to speak steadily, and striving to hold back the tears that would well up, to suppress the wild throbbing of the heart which visibly heaved her bosom, to be calm, and mistress of herself in this crisis; but it was more than even her brave spirit could accomplish. The sudden change from darkness to light, from isolation to companionship, was too overwhelming; and yet she would not show the shattered condition of her forces. "I am glad to see you"—her lip quivered; great, unshed tears, brimming over, hung sparkling on her long lashes as she spoke; and Wilton, gazing at the sweet face and slight, graceful figure, felt in his inmost soul the pathos of her controlled emotion.

"By Heaven, Ella, you are not indifferent to me!" he exclaimed. Drawing her to him, he raised her hands to clasp his neck; and, folding his arms round her, pressed her passionately to his heart. "My love, my life, why do you distrust me! Give me your heart, give me yourself! Are you ready to fulfil your more than half promise? I have kept the tryst. I have submitted to the test you have imposed; and now what further barrier is there between me and happiness? Do you love me, Ella? Will you love me?"

She did not attempt to move. She leant against him, silently, trembling very much; at length she sighed deeply.

"If you are quite sure of yourself," she almost whispered, "and not afraid of linking yourself with so isolated a creature as I am, I am ready to keep my word, as you have kept yours!"

"And you love me?" asked Wilton, bending over her, hungering for her assurance.

She extricated herself gently from him, still leaving her hand in his.

"I will love you," she replied, looking away, and speaking thoughtfully. Then, suddenly turning, and meeting his eyes with a grand frankness, "I *do* love you," she said, in her sweet, firm tones; "and I think you deserve my love! If you do not, out with love and life, and everything. I shall never believe more."

She pressed her hands over her eyes, and for a moment Wilton's passionate longing to cover her mouth, her cheek, her brow with kisses, was checked by the earnestness, the solemnity, of her words. It was but a moment, the next she was in his arms, his lips clinging to hers as though he could never drink enough of their sweetness.

"And how did you find me?" asked Ella, when at last she managed to withdraw from his embrace, and began to gather her drawing materials together as a diversion from the strange, sweet embarrassment of the new relations existing between them.

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Wilton replied by recapitulating the search he had made, up to the miserable night before.

"When I arrived at Gothic Villa this morning," he went on, "I was considerably before the time of the second delivery; but at last I met the postman, and explained myself to him. 'Gothic Villa, Kershaw,' he repeated. 'Now, that's curious. Not ten minutes ago I met a young lady what used to be at Gothic Villa, and she wanted to give me her new address, but I told her she must leave it at the district office.' You may guess the questions I put, and how I gathered that the young lady was yourself. He had a confused idea you said your abode was in Belinda Terrace, Notting Hill, and I have been for the last nearly three hours endeavouring to discover it. Finding there was no such place as Belinda Terrace, I tried my luck in Melina Crescent, and, after knocking and ringing at eleven doors, found the right one at last!"

"Then, had I walked down the street, instead of meeting the postman at the top of it, I should have met you," said Ella, pausing in her occupation, with her design in her hand.

"Yes; and saved me three hours of torture," exclaimed Wilton. "What have you there? This is a very charming design; quite your own?"

"Yes, quite. Some days ago I took a much smaller one to a shop in —— Street, and the man there gave me two pounds and two shillings for it. Then he asked me to bring him something else, larger and richer, so I have been trying to sketch something better."

"My own darling," said Wilton, taking it from her; "this sort of thing is over now. No more work for you."

"Why not," she returned. "You say, dear friend, that you are not rich. If I am really to be your comrade through life, why may I not earn some money for us both; life without work must be very dull."

"When you are my wife, you will see such things are impossible," said Wilton, laying aside the sketch, and drawing her to his side on a little hard, horsehair, lodging-house sofa. "I have so much to say, so much to urge on you, I hardly know where to begin."

Whereupon he plunged into a rapid statement of his plans, his hopes, his strong conviction that, calmly and dispassionately considered, her position and his own rendered an immediate marriage absolutely and imperatively necessary. She had no one to consult, nor any protector to rely upon save himself, and the sooner he had a legal claim to be her protector the better. As to himself, no one had a right to interfere with him; nevertheless, there was an old man, a relative, who might make himself disagreeable if he had time. After marriage, all objections, interference, or meddlings would be useless.

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"I have a favourite sister to whom I shall write at once," concluded Wilton, "but she is away in Canada. So, dearest, why should we submit to the discomfort of needless delay. I shall have a renewal of leave, but only for a couple of months, part of which must be spent in effecting an exchange into some regiment in India, or going there. You see there will be little left for the honeymoon. What do you say to this day week?"

Wilton felt the hand he held suddenly tighten on his with a quick, startled pressure.

"Yes," he went on; "there is no possible objection. You have been at least three weeks in this parish, which is, I believe, the legal requirement. There is, then, no impediment; and, though it seems very like urging you to take a leap in the dark, you must either trust me altogether or throw me over. We are too peculiarly situated to perform the cold-blooded ceremony of cultivating each other's acquaintance; we must do that, as I believe all people really do, after rather than before marriage. Besides, I am so desperately afraid of your melting away out of my grasp, as you had nearly done just now, that I am determined not to lose my hold."

"Listen to me," said Ella, drawing away her hand and pressing it to her brow. "You mentioned a relative to whom your marriage might be painful. Do you owe this old man love and respect? I think if you do, it is hard to those who feel they ought to be considered to find an utter stranger preferred."

"Lord St. George has not the shadow of a claim on my love or respect," returned Wilton, rising and pacing to and fro; "and if he had, it would not influence me. Now that you have really consented to be my wife, nothing, save death, shall come between us." There was in his voice and look and gesture such fire and resolution that a sudden sense of being in the presence of something stronger than herself thrilled Ella with a strange fear and pleasure. She closed her eyes, and her hands, that had clasped each other tightly, relaxed as she felt her life had passed from her own keeping into another's. Wilton, who had paused opposite her, saw how deeply she was moved. "Look at me, Ella," he exclaimed, taking her hands in his; "look at me! You are too nobly frank to hesitate as to a day sooner or later in the fulfilment of your promise."

She turned to him, and with a wistful, earnest look straight into his eyes, said in a low, firm voice, "So be it! I will keep my word when and where you like."

Two days after Major Moncrief, who had only seen Wilton once for a few minutes in the interim, awaited him by appointment at Morley's, where they were to dine.

"Why, what the deuce are you so desperately busy about?" asked

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the Major, as Wilton hastily apologised for not having been ready to receive his friend.

"Oh, I have a hundred things in hand. I have had to "interview" my lawyer, and then I have been with Box and Brushwood about exchanging into a regiment under orders for India—and—but the rest after dinner."

"Why, what are you up to now?" replied Moncrief, but not in the tone of a man that expects a direct reply.

Dinner passed very agreeably, for Wilton was in brilliant spirits. Not for many a year had Moncrief seen him so bright.

"I believe this is the same room we dined in the day you started for Monkscleugh, and had the smash," observed Moncrief, as the waiter, having placed dessert on the table, left the friends together.

"It is," said Wilton, looking round. "That is rather curious; and I remember your saying 'I must dree my weird.' Well, Moncrief, I have dreed it, and I asked you here to-day to tell you the history, and receive your blessing or malediction, as the case may be."

Setting down his glass of port untasted, the Major stared at his friend with an air of dismay and bewilderment.

"Courage, man!" continued Wilton, laughing at his consternation; "I am not in debt—only in love, and going to be married on Thursday next."

"To be married? You—who could not oblige your pleasant relative, Lord St. George, because of your invincible objection to lose your liberty."

"Well, the liberty is gone long ago; so my only plan is to surrender at discretion, or rather without discretion. You remember a young lady we met at Brosedale; the lassie, in short, whom I picked out of the snow?"

"What! that pale-faced, dark-eyed little girl—young Fergusson's companion or drawing-mistress? Why, she was scarce pretty."

"Just so. Well, I am going to marry her on Thursday. Will you come to the wedding?"

Wilton had poured out a bumper of claret as he spoke, and, with a slight, defiant nod, drank it off.

"By ——," exclaimed Moncrief, who did not usually use strong language, "I am astonished. When did you decide on this preposterous piece of foolery?"

"I put things in train last December, but the date was not decided till two days ago."

"Ha! I thought I smelt a rat just before I left Glenravon; but I never dreamed of anything so serious. You are the last man I should have accused of such idiotic weakness. Who is this girl?"

"I do not know."

"Who was her father?"

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"A political adventurer, I believe; but I really do not know."

"Who are her friends?"

"She has none."

"And, my God! Wilton, are you going to link yourself for life to a woman you know nothing about—who may have a murderer for her father and a harlot for her mother—who may be an unprincipled adventuress herself for aught you know?"

"Go on," said Wilton calmly. "I know you have a good deal more to say, and I am quite prepared to hear it."

"Can you be such a besotted blockhead at this time of life, after having got over the wild-goose period, and not so badly either; when you have just been offered your first good chance, when a sensible marriage is so important, as to throw every consideration to the dogs for a madness that probably a month or two will cure, and leave you two-thirds of a lifetime to eat your heart out with useless regret! You know I do not pretend to despise women, or to talk cynical rot about them; they are generally good, useful creatures, and deucedly pleasant sometimes; but, God bless my soul, lad! they are of no real importance in a man's life. It is very essential to marry the right sort of girl, I grant—that is a well-bred, healthy, good-looking lassie in your own grade of life, who will bring a good connection to back up your children; but to rush into matrimony—downright legal matrimony—with a creature that scarcely knows who she is herself, because, indeed, you think no other 'she' in creation so likely to suit you, is a pitiable piece of lunacy. Come! in the name of common sense, of self-respect, be a man! Tell me how you stand with this girl, and let me see if I can't get you out of the scrape."

"Have you quite done?" asked Wilton, leaning back in his chair without the slightest symptom of irritation.

"I have."

"Then hear me, Moncrief! I do not dispute a syllable you say. It is all unanswerable—just what I should say myself to another fellow on the brink of such a leap in the dark. Don't suppose I am blind to the apparent folly I am about to commit. But I'll do it! Nothing can hold me back! I shall not attempt to explain to you the sort of fascination Ella Rivers has had for me from the first moment we met; it would be speaking an unknown tongue, even if I could put it into language. But if her people were all you picture, by heaven! I do not think I could give her up. Foolish lunatic—besotted as you choose to think me, I have full faith in the woman who will be my wife before five days are over. There! Consider the question 'to be or not to be' settled. Pity my idiotic folly as you will, but do not discard your old *protégé*. I want your advice on one or two points."

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"But, Wilton, I must ——" began the Major.

"Don't," interrupted Wilton. "Remonstrance is sheer loss of time and breath; if you persist, I will leave you to finish your port alone."

Moncrief succumbed, though with an ill grace, and Wilton proceeded to lay the question of exchange into a regiment already in India, or one about to proceed there, before his ancient mentor, and gradually drew him into better humour, especially as he noted that Wilton's professional ambition was by no means dulled or engulphed by the tide of passion that swept him away in another direction.

"Well, I never thought I should find you looking forward, contentedly, to a life in India," said the Major, after a long and animated talk, anent the pros and cons of Wilton's views; "you used to long for a stake in the 'old countrie.'"

"Yes; but that was because Lord St. George put it into my head. Now, that is at an end."

"Ah, just so—this infernal marriage! What do you intend to do with him, eh?"

"I have not given it a thought—or rather, scarce a thought. I will marry first, and decide after. I tell you candidly, Moncrief, when first I made up my mind to risk everything, rather than part with Ella, I had a stupid, cowardly idea of a private marriage; but I soon gave that up; it was too deucedly ungentlemanlike; and then Ella would despise even a shadow of double-dealing! No; when we are married, and I have time, I will write to the old Viscount, and ——"

"By George, this is too bad!" cried the Major, getting up and pacing the room in an agony. "Fortune, and fair prospects, and—and everything flung overboard, for the sake of a white-faced bit of a girl that you would forget in two months if you made the first stand. It's like giving up drink, or cigars; the first week is the brunt of the battle!"

"Don't talk blasphemy," returned Wilton sternly, "nor waste time and breath."

"Well, well," resumed the rebuked Major, "look here, do not be in too great a hurry to write to the old peer. I met St. George Wilton to-day; he told me Lord St. George was down at Brandestone, and very shaky; perhaps you had better not write to him till the honeymoon is over. Oh Lord, won't you be ready to cut your throat when you get his answer! but I trust he will die and leave you the property in the meantime."

"He will not do that," said Wilton gravely. "But, tell me, what is St. George doing in town? I hate that fellow instinctively."

"Oh, he was only passing through *en route* to join some 'Lord

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knows who,' at Cowes, to cruise somewhere in his yacht, and —— Where are you going?"

"Why, you will not take any more wine, and, as I have not seen Ella to-day, I thought I would just run down and bid her good-night. Come with me, old fellow, do! I'd take it as a real bit of good-fellowship; she would be so pleased. You may as well submit to the inevitable with a good grace."

"Go with you to see this—ahem—fascinating little witch! not to get the step I've been waiting for these seven years!"

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